BC | ASIA Twinning Toolkit

OPENING B.C. COMMUNITIES TO THE WORLD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

INTRODUCTION 6
- Pacific Century 6
- Asia Pacific Initiative 7
- B.C. Asia Twinning Project 8
- Twinning Tool Kit 8

MAKING THE CASE 10
- Context for Twinning 10
- Implications for B.C.'s Communities 11
- Twinning as a Tool for Development 11

GETTING STARTED 14
- Local Government Endorsement 14
- Twinning Organization 16
- Goals and Objectives 18

SELECTING A TWIN 20
- Identifying Candidates 20
- First-Stage Assessment 21
- Detailed Assessment 22

TOWARDS AN ARRANGEMENT 24
- Formal Invitation 24
- Setting Terms 26
- Formalizing the Arrangement 26
- Cultural Education 28

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MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL 29

Building Profile Overseas 29

Expanding Local Support and Involvement 30

Reviewing the Agreement 31

Cancelling an Arrangement 31

MEASURING PROGRESS 32

Importance of Assessment 32

Challenges 32

Benefits to Measure 33

Generic Approach to Assessment 36

PROFILES OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS 37

Observations 37

City of Burnaby 39

City of Castlegar 41

City of Kamloops 43

Town of Lake Cowichan 46

City of Merritt 48

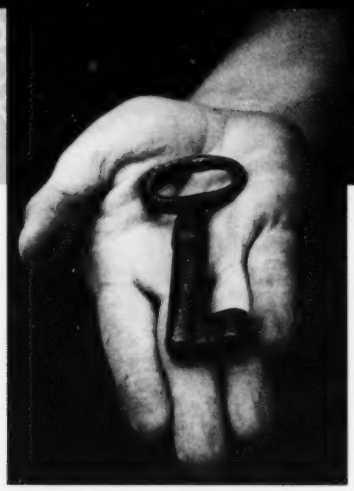
City of Penticton 50

City of Port Moody 53

City of Quesnel 55

City of Richmond 58

City of Victoria 61



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B.C. Asia Twinnings Website

This Tool Kit and additional information on twinnings is available on the Internet at: www.bcasiatwinnings.gov.bc.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 21st Century is the Pacific Century — an era in which the economic development of the Province and its communities will be increasingly determined by the ability of British Columbians to identify and tap into economic opportunities in the Asia Pacific region.

Today, British Columbia's potential for economic gain in Asia Pacific, is simply that — *potential*. Realizing the potential, and achieving *actual* gain, will not happen without a fundamental change in the way British Columbians view Asia Pacific.

Strong relationships with the region need to be established and cultivated. Relationships at the local, provincial and national levels are important. Ultimately, however, real progress will be dependent on the development of connections between organizations and people at the community level.

Local governments in B.C. are in a unique position to encourage the development of such relationships. Local governments are well positioned to reach out to their counterparts in Asia and establish inter-community, bilateral agreements aimed at promoting tangible linkages between the different jurisdictions. These "twinning arrangements" provide the frameworks necessary for relationships between businesses, education centres, organizations and individuals to take root and grow.

The *Twinning Tool Kit* is a practical, "how-to" guide for local governments that are interested in establishing new international twinning arrangements, or enhancing existing ones.

CHAPTER 1 – Making the Case

The drive to establish strong twinning relationships is based on a recognition of longer-term economic challenges and opportunities facing B.C., including the:

- need for continued diversification beyond resource-based industries
- importance of international trade
- value of immigration
- development potential for smaller communities in the "new" economy
- rise of Asia the global stage

Throughout B.C. there is a growing appreciation of these challenges and opportunities, and a growing recognition that British Columbians will have to work harder — and more imaginatively — to continue to thrive in the global, 21st Century economy. Much of the effort will need to occur at the community level. Communities will need to develop and commit to approaches that promote new definitions of development, and that are tailored to meet local challenges and capitalize on local strengths.

International twinning is one means of promoting development. While not a practical option for all communities — and not a panacea for any — well thought-out and supported twinning arrangements can form part of new development strategies for many B.C. communities.

CHAPTER 2 – Getting Started

Chapter 2 provides guidance on the first steps to take in the twinning process.

Local Government Endorsement — Council needs to explicitly endorse the twinning concept. Council's early support will give the initiative the profile and legitimacy required to succeed both at home and internationally.

Twinning Organization — An organization needs to be established or appointed to lead the initiative. There are three options: a Council committee; a separate, single-purpose twinning society; or an existing arm's-length body (e.g., economic development commission) that oversees a range of related initiatives.

Goals and Objectives — What does the community want to achieve from the twinning arrangement? What are the community's key strengths on which to build? These questions should be addressed through a strategic planning exercise.

When embarking on twinning initiatives, proponents should understand that twinning arrangements do not typically generate short-term economic returns. Economically robust arrangements are rooted in strong inter-community relationships that take time to develop. Proponents must also understand that considerable commitment and investment are required to properly establish (and sustain) a twinning arrangement.

CHAPTER 3 – Selecting A Twin

Chapter 3 focuses on the selection of a partner community.

Identifying Candidates — The first step is for the twinning organization to develop a list of potential candidates.

First-Stage Assessment — A first-stage filter needs to be created and applied to the candidates in an effort to identify a more manageable short list.

Detailed Assessment — A detailed assessment of each short-listed candidate is required in order to find the best match.

CHAPTER 4 – Towards An Arrangement

Chapter 4 outlines suggested steps for proponents to follow in working with their prospective twin towards an official twinning arrangement. Also discussed in Chapter 4 is the importance of cultural education.

Formal Invitation — The first step for the twinning organization is to issue a formal invitation to develop an official twinning arrangement. The letter of invitation should be sent from the Mayor to their counterpart, even in cases where the twinning organization exists at arm's length to Council.

Setting Terms — The twinning organization needs to work with its counterpart to develop terms that enable both communities to achieve their goals.

Formalizing the Arrangement — Once the terms of the relationship have been established, the twinning arrangement is ready to be formalized. The twinning organization and local government should be prepared to send an official delegation to Asia.

CHAPTER 5 – Maximizing Potential

The formal twinning arrangement is best thought of as an opportunity. To maximize the arrangement's potential, proponents need to make ongoing efforts, including those aimed at:

- building the profile of the B.C. partner and the twinning relationship among decision-makers in the Asia Pacific community
- expanding the level of local support for, and involvement in, the relationship
- periodically reviewing, with the Asian partner, the arrangement and its terms

CHAPTER 6 – Measuring Progress

How do proponents know if they are getting a good return on their investment in a specific twinning arrangement?

It is important to develop and follow an assessment program. Such a program will help to identify areas of demonstrated success, as well as areas that need to be reconsidered. This will help to build public confidence in twinning as a valuable tool for economic development.

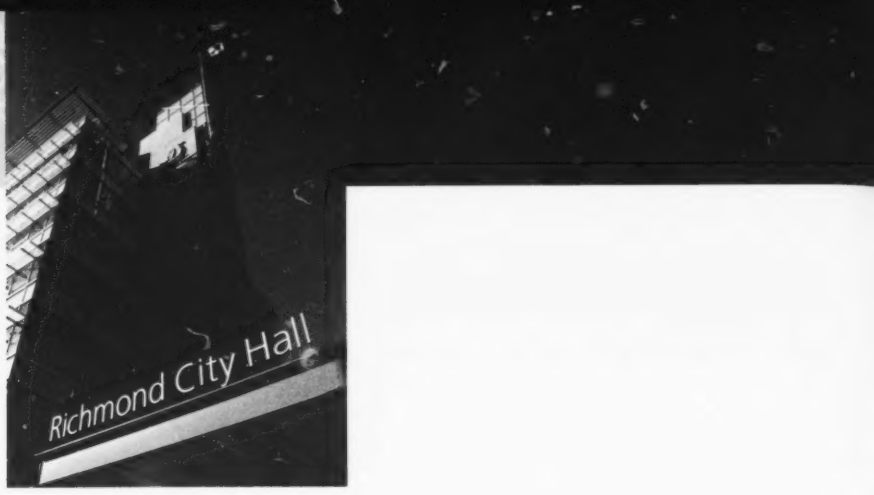
The nature of assessments will vary in each case according to the scope of the twinning arrangement and the expectations of the participants. A generic approach, however, will include the following:

- identification of the specific benefits to measure
- development of a suite of indicators
- establishment and monitoring of benchmarks
- development of a process for monitoring, on an ongoing basis, progress towards achieving the benefits
- publication of annual reports on the twinning effort
- a major assessment after five years
- a strategic evaluation after ten years

CHAPTER 7 – Profiles of Existing Arrangements

Chapter 7 profiles the Asia Pacific twinning experiences of ten communities in B.C. Some general observations on the experiences can be made:

- All of the profiled communities have focused their Asian twinning efforts on Japan. However, more recently the focus is shifting towards China. No community in B.C. has yet established formal ties with India or South Korea.
- The longest-standing twinning relationships are with Japanese communities. Few of these arrangements were initiated to promote mutual economic development — cultural and educational activities were, and remain, the focus of twinning arrangements involving Japanese communities.
- China is the focus of most new twinning initiatives currently being pursued by B.C. communities. There is, however, growing interest in, and potential for, twinning with communities in both South Korea and India. In contrast to existing Japanese agreements, twinning arrangements with Chinese communities tend to focus on economic objectives.
- Twinning arrangements in British Columbia have evolved organically over time. However, the current efforts of Richmond, Kamloops and Port Moody demonstrate that initiatives benefit from a certain amount of rigour and structure.



INTRODUCTION

Pacific Century

The 21st Century is the Pacific Century — an era in which the continued economic development of the Province and its communities will be increasingly determined by the ability of British Columbians to identify and tap into economic opportunities in the Asia Pacific region.

The economic strength of Asia Pacific is growing exponentially, particularly in China, India, Japan and South Korea. In recent decades, the region has grown to the point where, today, it accounts for 36 per cent of world GDP. By 2020, this is expected to rise to 43 per cent.[1] Asia Pacific is home to four of the world's largest and most dynamic national economies.

China's economy is the second largest in the world, behind only that of the United States. By 2020, the Chinese economy is expected to surpass the United States.

India's economy, currently the fourth largest, is recording annual growth rates that are almost triple those in Canada. With a young population and expanding middle class, India is quickly emerging as a global economic powerhouse.

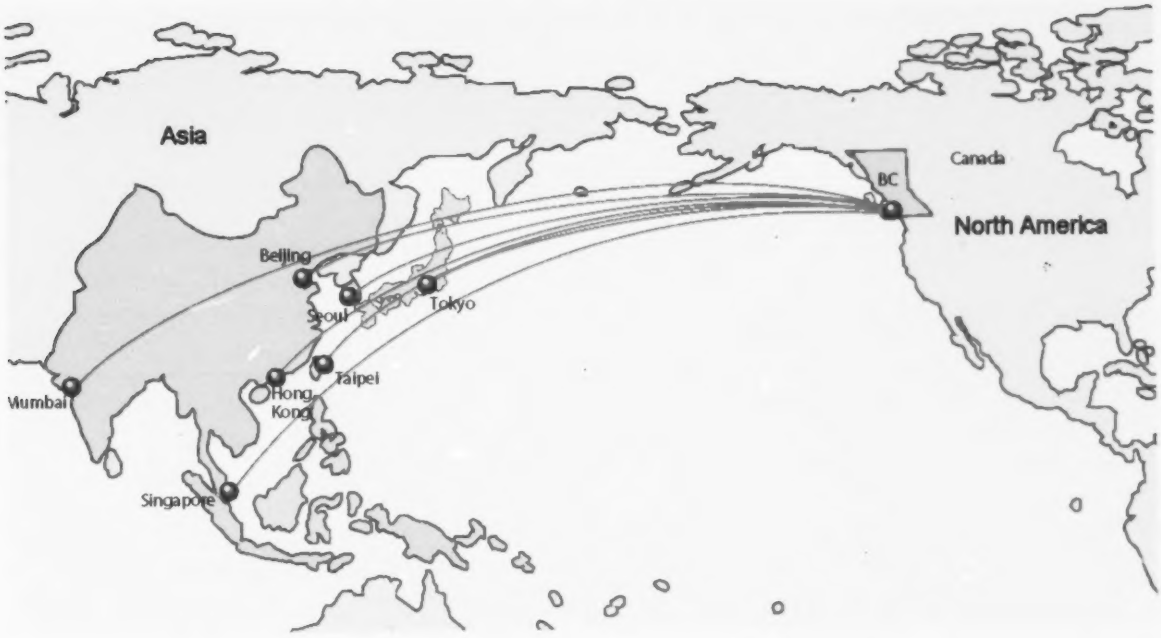
Japan's economy, buttressed by a well-established history of innovation and technology, is destined to remain vibrant in the years ahead.

South Korea's economy is rooted firmly in high technology and knowledge-based industries and is well-positioned for future expansion. South Korea's efforts to position itself as a transportation and logistics "super hub" for all of Northeast Asia will further advance the country on the world stage.

As Asian economies continue to grow, they will become ever more integrated into the international economy. With further integration, the possibilities will multiply for those with key services and products to provide in sectors as diverse as forestry, energy, transportation, tourism, biotechnology, education and the environment. Communities across British Columbia are home to businesses, centres of education and organizations that excel in all of these areas. The potential for British Columbia as a whole to tap into and benefit from the myriad of opportunities in Asia Pacific is substantial.

At this point in time, British Columbia's potential for economic gain, is simply that — *potential*. Realizing the potential, and achieving *actual* gain, will not happen without a fundamental change in the way British Columbians view Asia Pacific. Success will in part depend on the recognition that British Columbia is an integral part of the economic and cultural fabric of the Asia Pacific region.

1 *Asia Pacific initiative*, Province of B.C. 2007



Asia Pacific Initiative

In early 2007, the provincial government released its *Asia Pacific Initiative*, a plan designed to help develop the strategies necessary to better integrate British Columbia with Asia Pacific. The Province's goal under the Initiative is ambitious. It calls for British Columbia, by 2020, to be:

> ***"...recognized internationally as North America's capital for Asia Pacific commerce and culture."***

To achieve this goal, the Initiative outlines five strategies:

- Build a global identity for Canada's Pacific Gateway
- Strengthen B.C.'s Asia Pacific trade and investment relationships
- Develop a world-class supply chain and gateway infrastructure
- Develop and attract a labour force that has Pacific Century skills
- Position B.C. as North America's Asia Pacific destination

Through each of these strategies and its associated actions runs a common theme — the importance of personal, cultural, educational and economic relationships. For British Columbia to become fully integrated with Asia Pacific, to capitalize on the existing and future opportunities available, and to become North America's centre for Asia Pacific culture and commerce, strong relationships with the region need to be established and cultivated.

Relationships must be fostered at the local, provincial and national levels. Strong connections at all levels will ultimately lead to mutually-beneficial trade, immigration and other policies. However, real progress will be dependent on the development of connections between organizations and people at the community level. It is within communities that businesses, centres of education, organizations and individuals exist and operate. It is within communities that the action occurs.

Local governments are well positioned to reach out to their counterparts in Asia and establish bilateral agreements promoting tangible linkages between the different jurisdictions. These "twinning arrangements" (or sister city agreements) provide the means necessary for relationships between businesses, education centres, organizations and individuals to take root and grow.

B.C. Asia Twinning Project

Currently local governments in B.C. are involved in over one hundred twinning arrangements with international communities. Approximately half of these arrangements are with communities in Asia Pacific, primarily cities in Japan and, to a lesser extent, China. Many of these arrangements were established several years ago. Some remain vibrant, while others are inactive.

To date twinning arrangements have evolved organically. Local governments and their citizens have taken the initiative to pursue and form their own connections with Asia Pacific cities. The potential economic benefit of twinning arrangements has prompted the provincial government to establish the *B.C. Asia Twinning Project*. This Project supports the broader *Asia Pacific Initiative* by promoting the creation of economically-robust alliances between B.C. local governments and their Asian counterparts. The *Twinning Tool Kit* is a key component of the *Asia Pacific Initiative*.

Twinning Tool Kit

The *B.C. Asia Twinning Tool Kit* is a practical, "how-to" guide for local governments that are interested in establishing new international twinning arrangements, or enhancing existing ones.

Chapter 1 of the *Tool Kit* answers the question as to why local governments and their communities may choose to pursue and support such arrangements. Chapters 2 through 5 provide advice to local

FIGURE 1.1

Organizations & Communities Contacted

Organizations
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada – www.asiapacific.ca/
Asia Pacific Trade Council – www.asiapacifictradecouncil.ca/
British Columbia Institute of Technology – (Sustainable Urban Development) www.bcit.ca/
Business Victoria – www.businessvictoria.net/
Federation of Canadian Municipalities – www.fcm.ca/
B.C. Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat – www.gov.bc.ca/igrs/
B.C. Ministry of Community Services – www.gov.bc.ca/cserv/
B.C. Ministry of Economic Development – www.gov.bc.ca/ecdev/
Simon Fraser University (Political Science) – www.sfu.ca/polysci/
Sister Cities International – www.sister-cities.org/
Union of British Columbia Municipalities – www.civicnet.bc.ca/
University of British Columbia (Geography) – www.geog.ubc.ca/
Communities
Village of Ashcroft – www.village.ashcroft.bc.ca/
City of Burnaby – www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/
City of Castlegar – www.castlegar.ca/
City of Kamloops – www.kamloops.ca/
Town of Lake Cowichan – www.town.lakecowichan.bc.ca/
City of Merritt – www.merritt.ca/
City of Penticton – www.penticton.ca/
City of Port Moody – www.cityofportmoody.com
City of Quesnel – www.city.quesnel.bc.ca/
City of Prince George – www.city.pg.bc.ca/
City of Richmond – www.richmond.ca/
City of Vancouver – www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/
City of Victoria – www.victoria.ca/

governments on getting started, selecting a twin, establishing an arrangement, and maximizing the potential of arrangements over time. Chapter 6 examines the challenge of measuring progress. Chapter 7 profiles the twinning experiences of ten communities from around the province.

The advice and information provided in the *Tool Kit* is based on research conducted over the summer of 2007. Included in the research were extensive interviews with organizations active in B.C.-Asia Pacific affairs. The experiences of communities with Asia Pacific twinning relationships in place today were also studied. Figure 1.1 provides a list of the organizations and local governments contacted by researchers.

The *Tool Kit* emphasizes the establishment and enhancement of twinning arrangements that are economically robust — that is, arrangements whose primary purpose is to foster mutually-beneficial business relationships. The emphasis on economic benefits, however, can be complementary to cultural and educational twinning arrangements. These activities have their own intrinsic value that should not be discounted. Moreover, many non-commercial activities do, in fact, generate significant economic return to communities. Visits by foreign students to B.C. educational institutions are a case in point. Non-commercial linkages can be exceedingly important in building mutual trust and a sense of comfort between communities. These factors are critical to successful business relationships, and are often necessary to have in place in order for business relationships to develop.

The Asia Pacific region is large, diverse and home to many countries at varying levels of development. Through the *B.C. Asia Twinning Project*, the Province has committed to focus its efforts on fostering opportunities in four of the region's key countries: China (including Hong Kong), Japan, India and South Korea. This focus is based on research conducted by key organizations such as the *Asia Pacific Trade Council*.

The advice presented in this *Tool Kit* may be applied to twinning initiatives outside of the four focus countries or the broader Asia Pacific region.

CHAPTER 1 – MAKING THE CASE

Why should local governments and their communities be interested in establishing twinning arrangements with their counterparts in Asia? This question is sure to arise as the concept of twinning becomes more widely discussed.

Mayor Terry Lake, City of Kamloops

"Our relationship with Changping, a district of Beijing, has tremendous potential to ensure Kamloops does not miss out on business, education and cultural opportunities with this economic behemoth."

Context for Twinning

The drive to establish strong twinning relationships is based on a recognition of the longer-term economic challenges and opportunities in British Columbia.

➤ ASIA RISING

The focus of growth, change and development on a global level has decisively shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Pacific is the arena in which British Columbia's prospects and future will be shaped and realized.

➤ IMPORTANCE OF TRADE

Globally international trade volumes and values have expanded at rates far higher than national and regional economic growth. Resource commodities and manufactured goods comprise a key part of the trade that occurs, but increasingly so too do services, capital and culture. For well over a century, global trade has been important to B.C.'s economic development. Today that importance is stronger than ever for both large centres and smaller communities throughout the province.

➤ VALUE OF IMMIGRATION

The dramatic expansion of international trade has been accompanied by significant growth in global migration. Canada has been a leading destination for international immigrants for many years. Within Canada, B.C. has been the destination of choice for a significant share of those newcomers. Continued inflows of people place pressures on communities in terms of servicing and infrastructure costs, but also confer substantial benefits including the infusion of skills, energy and human capital, and also increased international connectivity — an asset that is widely acknowledged as critical to development in the 21st Century.

➤ NEED FOR DIVERSIFICATION

Despite recent growth, B.C. continues to be viewed on a global scale as a small, open-trading economy that is highly dependent on commodity exports and subject to periodic boom and bust cycles. Resource use, depletion and periodic shocks and stresses (e.g., the Mountain Pine Beetle) are affecting the province's base for continued resource-led

development. Even in the more economically successful regions of the province, higher capital intensification has resulted in leaner workforces. These realities, when taken together, point to a need for greater economic diversification.

➤ **POTENTIAL FOR SMALLER COMMUNITIES**

The beneficiaries of rapid growth in international trade and migration have traditionally been the world cities (e.g., London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong), and smaller metropolitan areas with niche strengths and gateway roles such as Vancouver. Today, however, there are greater opportunities for a wider range of communities to share in the rewards associated with this growth. Migration patterns, telecommunications technology, new trading and exchange instruments, the shift to a knowledge-based economy, and the emergent rise of creative industries have combined to help open economic opportunities for small and medium regional centres.

Even with these factors in play, the economic opportunities available to smaller centres may not be easily realized. Efforts to include smaller centres will need to be supported by strategic policies and programs, including ones directed to the nurturing of new clusters for competitive advantage. Aggressive innovation and visioning will be required for all of B.C. to benefit in the new environment. "Business as usual," at the regional and community levels, is no longer a sustainable option in the 21st Century economy.

Implications for B.C.'s Communities

Throughout B.C. there is a growing appreciation of these economic challenges and opportunities, and a growing recognition that British Columbians will have to work harder — and more imaginatively — to continue to thrive in the global, 21st Century economy. The resource economy that fuelled past development required major investments in physical infrastructure and human capital. While these factors will remain elements of B.C.'s future development, they will not be sufficient to negotiate the transition required to sustain economic growth, socioeconomic progress, and economic prosperity for British Columbians.

Future development for many B.C. communities and regions will be driven by, and dependent upon, new industries, occupations and new ways of thinking.

Growth will likely take place incrementally, rather than through the substantive yields generated by the mega-projects of the past. New definitions of development will be required — definitions that acknowledge the centrality of education, culture, social capital, and perhaps above all, awareness of Asia Pacific and B.C.'s place within it.

B.C. is entering a period that will require innovative economic policies, programs and efforts directed towards community and regional development. Much of the effort, however, will occur at the community level. Communities will need to develop and commit to approaches that promote new definitions of development, and that are tailored to meet local challenges and capitalize on local strengths.

Twinning as a Tool for Development

The Province and the Union of B.C. Municipalities have identified international twinning as one means of promoting economic development in British Columbia. While not a practical option for all communities — and not a panacea for any — well thought-out and supported twinning arrangements can form part of new development strategies for many B.C. communities.

➤ ASIA PACIFIC GATEWAY CULTURE

Strong immigration, the growth of vibrant Asian communities within B.C, and increasing exchange with Asian countries have established an Asia Pacific Gateway Culture in certain parts of the province. What is needed now are efforts to strengthen this culture where it exists, and also to extend it to other communities and regions across B.C.

Well-established and appropriately resourced twinning arrangements can expand local knowledge and awareness of international markets, societies and cultures. In the new 21st Century economy, cultural awareness represents not only a possible conduit to economic growth, but a form of development in and of itself.

➤ ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Export trade from B.C. has traditionally taken the form of resource commodities and more recently high-value goods and services. While this trade will remain important, there are opportunities for trade across a more diverse range of industries and activities, many of which can be sourced from smaller communities.

Emerging industries, commodities and activities include:

- education
- environmental industries
- creative industries and cultural products
- cultural and educational exchange
- value-added resource products
- high-value crafts
- consultancy services

Realizing and capitalizing on the potential for trade across this broader range of products and services will require appropriate tools and supports — it is here that twinning agreements may play a key role.

Twinning arrangements will help to highlight new international travel and tourism opportunities, such as eco-tourism, cultural tourism (e.g., First Nations), and adventure tourism. These opportunities are emerging as a result of two separate but intersecting forces. The first is an increasing awareness of the finite nature of natural resources, and the resulting greater appreciation of ecological assets. The second is the growing wealth of Asia Pacific societies. Higher disposable incomes and a growing propensity to travel are widespread throughout Asia Pacific. In the more economically-advanced Asia Pacific nations (e.g. Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore), interest in niche activities such as eco-tourism and cultural tourism is on the rise.

Twinning arrangements can be used to promote opportunities in these specialized tourism sectors. Twinned communities in Asia may be used, for example, as entry points for marketing efforts aimed at the broader region or for initiatives beyond the scope of the twinning agreement.

➤ ADVANCES IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Innovations in telecommunications have opened up access for less central locations to international trade and exchange. With the advent of high-speed Internet and other advances in telecommunications, it is now possible for people in smaller and more remote centres to connect with their counterparts around the world. Telecommunications cannot replace reciprocal visits, exchanges and business missions — face-to-face contact remains a critical component of any good relationship. However, telecommunications can complement these other approaches. Relationships are all about communication — using technology to facilitate communication can enable relationships to develop and prosper.

William Beyers and David P. Lindahl of the University of Washington have studied what they call "lone eagles and high fliers" — individual workers situated outside of metropolitan areas and small knowledge-intensive firms.

Modern telecommunications allow these firms and entrepreneurs to conduct business across great distances, providing opportunities that a generation ago would have simply not existed. The experiences of these "lone eagles and high fliers" point to the development possibilities now available to non-metropolitan areas. Twinning arrangements can serve as the means to promote and facilitate these kinds of communications-enhanced exchanges between British Columbia and Asia Pacific.

➤ EXISTING EXPERTISE AND CAPACITY

Economic success and prosperity depend in part on the quality of local knowledge of international trade opportunities and business environments. Large centres tend to possess advantages, such as transportation hubs and concentrations of trade-active companies, services, institutions and individuals with specialized skill sets. But many smaller B.C. regions and communities are also heavily engaged in international exchange, by virtue of their ability to supply goods and products on global commodity markets.

Twinning arrangements can serve as vehicles to harness and build on existing expertise and capacity both in large centres, and smaller, more remote communities.

➤ INCUBATORS OF ENTERPRISE

Entrepreneurs, early career business people, students and others may be able to take advantage of twinning arrangements to expand their knowledge of international opportunities for trade, investment, education and cultural exchange. For example, in Quesnel, individuals who participated in past student exchanges to Shiraoi, Japan, went on to establish B.C.-based companies that cater to Japanese tourists, and that export specialty wood products to the Japanese market (see chapter 7).

➤ POLICY AND PROGRAM SYNERGIES

Local efforts to establish robust economic relationships with counterparts in Asia Pacific will undoubtedly benefit from synergies with various senior government policies and programs. Communities with twinning arrangements in place will be well-positioned to tap into provincial programs that promote distance education and exchange, international trade and commerce, the Asia Pacific Gateway, and the 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games.

CHAPTER 2 – GETTING STARTED

This chapter provides guidance on the first steps to take in the twinning process, once a decision has been made to pursue a twinning arrangement. The focus in this chapter is on helping B.C. communities prepare for twinnings. Efforts to select and work with Asia Pacific communities are addressed in later chapters.

Mayor Fred Bates, Village of Cumberland

"Putian China has expressed great interest in investing in Canada, and sees B.C. – via Cumberland and the Comox Valley as the "front door" to explore possibilities."

Three specific steps are required to get started:

- endorsing the twinning concept
- establishing a local twinning organization to champion the twinning initiative
- developing goals and objectives

Local Government Endorsement

The idea to pursue a twinning arrangement may arise from any number of different sources:

- an Asian community that approaches Council to explore twinning opportunities

WHAT TO EXPECT

As they embark on twinning initiatives, proponents should be clear on what to expect, and what not to expect.

- Twinning arrangements should not be counted on to generate quick, short-term economic returns. Economically-robust arrangements are rooted in strong inter-community relationships and take time to develop. Twinning proponents that understand this and invest the years needed to build deep community connections, will realize social, cultural and economical returns. Proponents that view twinning arrangements simply as trade deals or frameworks for business transactions will be disappointed.

- A second point relates to the level of early effort required. Systematically working through the steps to develop a successful twinning arrangement requires considerable commitment on the part of twinning proponents. As with any initiative, half-measures generate less-than-optimal returns. If proponents are unable or unwilling to commit the resources (energy, time, money) necessary to get started properly, the decision to undertake the project may need to be reconsidered.

- Finally, proponents will need to make the case for twinning to members of Council, business leaders and other community players who may understand to varying degrees the value of international twinning arrangements. Efforts may need to be made to generate support among those who do not yet fully realize the economic potential of Asia Pacific.

- an individual member of Council who has visited Asia and who has seen, first-hand, the range of opportunities available
- a member of the community with ties to, or interests in, Asia Pacific culture or business
- an academic at a local university, college or polytechnic institute with a research interest in Asia, or an existing connection in the region
- another local government with a successful twinning arrangement in place
- this *Tool Kit*

Regardless of how the idea arises, once it has attracted the attention of the local government, Council needs to determine whether or not to endorse the concept. Council's support is important throughout the life of the twinning arrangement, but is especially critical at this early stage. The local government may not ultimately take the lead in developing and maintaining the twinning relationship — another organization, arm's length to Council, may be the body that takes charge. Council's early involvement and explicit support, however, will give the initiative the profile and legitimacy required to succeed both at home and abroad.

Mayor Terry Lake, City of Kamloops

"Politicians who spend taxpayers' money on trips will always be under the gun, and so they should be, but those who sit on their hands for fear of criticism aren't really leaders, they're just taking up space."

The role of the Mayor, specifically, is important to note. As the head of Council and the chief elected official in the community, the Mayor's backing of the twinning concept is essential. Ideally, the Mayor will champion the twinning concept at this early stage in the process, spending the time required to make the case for Asia Pacific twinning to their Council colleagues, the business community, and other local leaders.

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Defining Community

Throughout the *Tool Kit*, "community" is defined as the geographic area of, and the activity that occurs within, an incorporated municipality. In many instances, this definition will be accurate. In some cases, however, community may extend beyond an individual jurisdiction to include neighbouring centres, a broader economic region, or all communities within a regional district.

How community is defined in any particular case will depend on a number of factors, including:

- whether or not there is a shared vision for twinning, and a history of cooperation, among neighbouring jurisdictions
- the area over which economic development initiatives are funded
- the size or political structure of the selected Asia Pacific twin
- the preference of the Asia Pacific twin
- the focus of the twinning arrangement (e.g., a tourism focus may be strengthened by including the broader region and its amenities)
- how key local players are organized (e.g., does membership in the Chamber or Board of Trade extend beyond the municipality)

The reliance on municipal terminology (e.g., "Council", "Mayor") throughout the *Tool Kit* should not preclude regional districts from participating in or driving twinning efforts. In most cases municipalities and their councils will take the lead. Regional district member jurisdictions could agree, however, to take collective action through their regional boards.

Establishing Mayor to Mayor relationships is vital to success when engaging with Asian countries in particular.

Twinning Organization

Once Council, with the Mayor at the forefront, has endorsed the concept of international twinning, an organization needs to be established and/or appointed to lead the initiative. In the early stages of the twinning process, the organization will need to generate community support for the concept, develop goals and objectives, select a partner community with which to twin, and work with the partner community to set the terms of the arrangement. Once an arrangement is in place, the organization will be responsible for monitoring events, expanding support for and involvement in the initiative, and assessing outcomes.

There are three basic organizational options. The first is a committee of Council — one that reports directly to Council and is assigned, like most Council committees, a certain amount of staff support. The second is a separate, single-purpose twinning society with its own executive, staff support and

FIGURE 2.1

Organizational Options — Pros & Cons

Council Committee	Independent Society	Existing (Arm's-Length) Body
Pros	***Pros***	***Pros***
✓ may be perceived as strong sign of Council support ✓ staff support assigned ✓ greater ability for Council to control and set direction	✓ dedicated body with one focus and purpose ✓ less vulnerable to political change and influence ✓ easy to include other jurisdictions ✓ "owned" by community ✓ determines own level of funding and finds support from a variety of sources	✓ body focused on similar initiatives (e.g., economic development) ✓ less vulnerable to political change and influence ✓ existing executive, support staff and policies ✓ potentially well known; community confidence high
Cons	***Cons***	***Cons***
✘ highly dependent on continuing political support ✘ subject to political influence ✘ one of many committees competing for attention ✘ difficult to include other jurisdictions ✘ level of funding set by Council	✘ must establish executive, support staff and policies ✘ often reliant on volunteers ✘ may not be recognized by Asian partner as official representative ✘ Council influence significantly lessened ✘ may be required to raise bulk of funding ✘ unknown entity; time required to gain confidence of community	✘ one of many initiatives competing for attention ✘ perception of Council support may be uncertain ✘ may be required to raise all or part of funding ✘ may be difficult to include other jurisdictions (unless a regional body)

membership. This organization would operate at arm's length to City Hall. The third option is an existing arm's length body, such as an economic development commission, that oversees a range of related initiatives. Under this option, twinning activities would invariably be organized under a committee or sub-group of the main body.

A scan of communities with existing Asia Pacific twinning arrangements (see Chapter 7) shows that all three organizational options are being used to further twinning initiatives. For example:

- Burnaby, Merritt and Richmond use committees of Council
- Penticton, Victoria, Quesnel and Lake Cowichan rely on independent, community societies
- Kamloops and Castlegar make use of multi-function, arm's-length bodies

There are pros and cons to each option that Council may want to consider in any given situation. Figure 2.1 identifies some of these factors.

Regardless of which one of these options is selected, certain factors are important for success. First, Council needs to clearly indicate its support for the twinning organization. An important way to demonstrate support is by providing adequate and ongoing funding. Council funding has both practical and symbolic value. In practical terms, the funding gives the organization a degree of security, and the wherewithal to move forward, particularly in the early days, but success lies in continuous support and investment. In symbolic terms, Council funding offers a strong demonstration of community backing for the twinning concept, and the specific twinning initiative. Council's investment of taxpayer dollars signals the organization and the world that the community believes that twinning and the specific twinning initiative are important.

In B.C., several Councils provide regular, dedicated funding to their twinning organizations. The Councils in the Town of Lake Cowichan and the City of Kamloops allocate $10,000 and $25,000 per year respectively to their twinning efforts. (See Chapter 7).

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Council Funding

Ongoing Council funding for the twinning organization is important for success. This funding provides a degree of financial security, and the means to move forward. Council funding also demonstrates strong support for twinning efforts.

Too much financial support from Council, however, may not be a good thing. There can be an inverse relationship between the amount of Council funding and the long-term success of a twinning initiative. Initiatives that receive large amounts of Council funding tend to be less robust than those which receive less. This may be attributed to the level of community buy-in. Twinning organizations that receive less-than-full funding from government are required to reach out to their broader communities for support. Efforts are required to convince key players in business and in other sectors of the value of twinning, and of the potential returns available. Once convinced, the key players help to champion the arrangement. Twinning, and the specific twinning arrangement, then become part of the community's mindset.

There are other ways, in addition to funding, for Council to show its support for the twinning organization. Where the organization is established outside of Council (i.e., not as a Council committee), Council can issue a strong resolution to back the organization and its activities. Council can also appoint one or more of its members as directors of the organization, or as "go-betweens" to liaise regularly with the organization's executive. Kamloops City Council, for example, appoints two of its members as directors to Venture Kamloops, the arm's-length agency that oversees the City's twinning efforts in China.

A second factor for success relates to the membership of the organization itself. It is important for the organization, whether it be a

committee of Council, an independent society, or an economic development commission, to have a diverse membership. The long-term success of a twinning arrangement requires broad support and participation from all sectors of the community. Such support and participation are most assured when leaders from various fields are included in discussions.

An ideal membership would include leaders from:

- Council
- the business community (e.g., Chamber of Commerce; Board of Trade)
- an economic development commission or office
- a local college, university or polytechnic
- the School Board
- the Health Authority
- service organizations (e.g., Rotary)
- the youth community
- the general citizenry

Representatives would ideally be chosen for their interest and/or experience in the Asia Pacific region, their understanding of the benefits of twinning, their commitment to the development of a strong twinning arrangement, and their ability to generate support from their own constituents as well as from the broader community.

Mayor David Laird, City of Merritt

"Twinnings make it possible for citizens in Interior communities to get to exchange information and have first-hand experiences with people from another part of the globe."

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Resources Available

To assist in identifying community strengths, twinning organizations can turn to a number of resources, including:

- B.C. Stats (www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca), which, among other services, produces local and regional profiles that identify key economic and other strengths
- local colleges, universities and polytechnics, most of which have faculty and staff with expertise in producing economic and other analyses
- local/regional economic development offices, which may be involved in profiling local strengths and opportunities, and in creating economic development plans
- Community Futures (www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc), which is present in many communities in B.C., exists in part to support initiatives aimed at promoting long-term economic development
- Ministry of Economic Development (www.gov.bc.ca/ecdev), which collects information on local centres and regions through its various offices
- other communities that are experienced in strategic planning exercises, particularly those related to twinning initiatives

Goals and Objectives

What does the community want to achieve from the twinning arrangement? What are the community's key strengths on which to build?

These questions should be addressed by the twinning organization in consultation with the groups represented in the organization and with the broader community as a whole. Some individuals involved in the organization will have a good sense of the potential benefits of twinning and may also have a general sense of goals and objectives for the community to pursue through twinning. What is

required, however, is a more structured, strategic approach. A strategic planning process is one mechanism to consider.

An appropriate starting point in the strategic planning process may be to explore and understand the community's own strengths. Communities benefit most in any relationship when they play to their strengths; it is important, therefore, to understand what these are. Many communities in B.C. will identify strengths related specifically to the traditional products and economic activities (e.g., natural resource extraction) that have helped to shape the province. These are important and will remain so, particularly in certain regions of B.C.

Continuing efforts to diversify B.C.'s economy, however, are resulting in the emergence of new economic sectors, such as:

- environmental services
- knowledge-based industries and services
- biotechnology
- educational services
- tourism, including niche activities such as eco-tourism and adventure tourism
- transportation services
- specialty manufacturing

It it important to identify where these emerging sectors, representative of the Pacific economy, exist in local communities. Through twinning arrangements, communities have the potential to access markets in Asia Pacific where the demand for these services and skills is ever-increasing.

Understanding which specific strengths exist, or are emerging locally, makes it easier for B.C. communities to identify the goals and objectives they wish to achieve through twinning. Goals and objectives may be wide-ranging, and will likely vary by community. Examples may include:

- to double, over five years, the number of visiting students from China at the local college
- to increase the number of eco-tourists and adventure tourists from Japan
- to promote the community's recognized expertise in sustainable agriculture, and to identify export opportunities in India for local firms

CHAPTER 3 – SELECTING A TWIN

Steps presented in this chapter shift the focus from B.C. to Asia Pacific. The chapter focuses, specifically, on the selection of a partner community, and deals with the need to identify a list of candidates from which to select a twin.

Identifying Candidates

The first step in selecting a partner community is for the twinning organization to develop a list of candidates. Potential candidates may come from a variety of sources, including:

- direct approaches by Asia Pacific communities that are seeking B.C. twins
- an individual member of Council who has met a counterpart from an Asia Pacific community
- members of the community with ties to, or interests in, an Asian country
- an academic at a local university, college or polytechnic with a research interest in Asia Pacific, or an existing connection in the region
- The Union of B.C. Municipalities (www.civicnet.bc.ca), which may receive or learn of requests from Asia Pacific communities
- the provincial government, which receives numerous Asia Pacific delegations and requests for international partnerships
- bilateral Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as the *Canada-China Business Council* (www.ccbc.com), that exist to promote relations with Asia
- foreign embassies and consulates, which are often aware of cities and regions seeking twinnings with Canadian cities

WHAT TO EXPECT

➤ Throughout the selection process, local governments and other proponents involved in the twinning organization may find themselves under pressure from various quarters to commit to specific twins. Persons who identify and recommend prospective Asia Pacific communities for twinning relationships typically have much at stake. There is considerable prestige — "face" — to be had for the person whose recommendation for twinning is accepted. Conversely, there is face to be lost for the person whose recommendation is rejected.

➤ Proponents should also recognize that a well-executed selection process requires adequate resources. The need to properly assess twinning candidates will require most communities to conduct and/or commission targeted research.

➤ Throughout the process, proponents need to remember that the arrangements they seek to establish are long-term, serious commitments. Proponents must be systematic and discriminating in selecting a community with which to twin. It is important to wisely invest the resources (time, money, energy) to ensure that the best match is chosen.

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Candidates for twinning may be identified as a result of direct approaches from Asia Pacific communities. Such approaches may be made through formal correspondence or by delegates from an Asian city who are visiting B.C.

It is not uncommon for visiting delegates to invite a B.C. Mayor to sign an MOU aimed at promoting friendship and cooperation between the two communities. Such invitations are also regularly presented to B.C. Mayors during their travels in Asia.

As spontaneous declarations of friendship, MOUs may be considered appropriate. The frequency and ease with which they are used, however, has substantially reduced any real value they may have once had as foundations for serious twinning arrangements.

In addition to these sources, twinning organizations may get assistance from organizations such as Sister Cities International (www.sister-cities.org). Organizations that join Sister Cities are granted access to their database of international communities seeking twinning relationships.

First-Stage Assessment

The list of candidates initially generated may be considerable — the City of Richmond's Sister Cities Committee identified fourteen potential twins in a recent twinning exercise they undertook (see Chapter 7). A first-stage filter, or checklist of criteria, created and applied to the candidates, would assist in identifying a more manageable short list. Figure 3.1 shows criteria that might be included in a first-stage filter.

In order to complete the assessment, the twinning organization will need to gather basic information on each of the candidate communities. Most of the details needed are easily researched using libraries or the Internet. Other sources of information may

FIGURE 3.1

First-Stage Filter

Criterion	Questions to Consider
Location	– is the community located within a country that has significant potential for future growth and opportunity – is the community situated in a vibrant and growing area, close to other centres and key markets – do other B.C. or Canadian communities have experience in the area
Economy	– is the local or regional economy large and diverse enough to provide opportunities for the B.C. community's key sectors – what does the economy have in common with that of the B.C. community (e.g., both are strong in tourism, agriculture, etc.)
Political Status	– is the community an independent municipality, able to make its own twinning decisions, or is it a district within a larger city
People	– are there similarities in terms of demographic groups – what is the size of the community – is there a strong connection with the B.C. community, or a group within it
History	– is there any common history or linkages with the community or broader region
Twinning Capacity	– has the community previously developed strong twinning arrangements – are there existing bilateral links between educational institutions or other bodies in the community – how many twinning arrangements does the community have and can it properly handle another – does the community already have a Canadian sister city

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

B.C. Institute of Technology International Business Services (www.bcit.ca/international)

Faculty and staff at BCIT have extensive international experience. The Institute itself has established a number of partnerships with counterparts throughout the world, including countries in the Asia Pacific region. China is a particular focus of BCIT's international activities.

Through its International Business Services (IBS) department, BCIT is available to help B.C. communities get connected to Asia Pacific. Multi-disciplinary teams from IBS can help communities identify and assess potential twins and select best matches.

IBS can also assist both the B.C. and Asia Pacific communities in establishing the terms of twinning arrangements (see Chapter 4), and in identifying specific, tangible joint economic opportunities to develop. IBS can also help to educate community leaders, through existing or customized programs, on doing business in Asia Pacific.

IBS has come to recognize the value of twinning arrangements. The most effective arrangements are those that move beyond words to identify and develop specific opportunities for exchange and joint development. IBS exists, in part, to facilitate such efforts.

include researchers at local colleges and universities, local high school classes (e.g., geography), and foreign consulates.

Detailed Assessment

While the first-stage assessment will produce a short list of viable candidate communities, a more detailed assessment of each short-listed candidate is required in order to find the best match.

A comprehensive assessment of each candidate must take into account the goals and objectives developed by the twinning organization. More specifically, the extent to which the goals and objectives can be achieved through a twinning arrangement with each candidate will need to be gauged. Such assessments may require a considerable amount of focused research as well as knowledge of the candidates and the environments within which they exist.

Some twinning organizations and/or local governments may have the resources (people and expertise) in-house to perform these assessments; however, in most cases other resources will need to be accessed. There are a number of resources to turn to for information and/or assistance:

- research and advisory centres at post-secondary institutions, such as: *International Business Services* at BCIT (www.bcit.ca/international); *Institute for Asian Research* at UBC (www.iar.ubc.ca); *Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives* at UVic (www.capi.uvic.ca)
- post-secondary students who may be available to undertake research, perhaps as part of a study program
- government, or government-funded research bodies, such as the *Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada* (www.asiapacific.ca)
- industry associations, such as the *Canada-China Business Council* (www.ccbc.com), and the *Canada-India Business Council* (www.canada-indiabusiness.ca)
- B.C. *Ministry of Economic Development* (www.gov.bc.ca/ecdev)
- other B.C. communities with experience in assessing Asia Pacific candidates

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Visits to Candidate Countries

Twinning organizations that invest in overseas visits to better assess short-listed candidates should be careful to communicate very clearly the purpose of the visits. Without clear statements regarding purpose, hosts in candidate cities may assume that the visit is an official delegation sent to enter into a formal twinning arrangement.

It is also important for the twinning organization to cover all of the expenses of its delegation. Only by covering its own expenses can the organization protect itself (and the twinning initiative) from the perception of conflict of interest, and from any sense of obligation to a particular candidate.

As part of the detailed assessment, proponents should make formal contact with each short-listed candidate. In a letter written in both languages to their counterpart, the Mayor should explain clearly that the community is interested in developing a formal twinning arrangement in the Asia Pacific region, and is contacting a small number of communities to gauge their level of interest.

The letter should outline, in general terms, what the community hopes to achieve from a formal relationship. The letter should also outline some of the potential benefits to the Asia Pacific partner (e.g., joint economic pursuits in key sectors; entry point to North American markets; educational and cultural possibilities). A profile of the B.C. community (promotional materials, statistics, etc.) should be included with the letter.

The letter provides an opportunity to gather additional information on the candidate to feed into the selection process. Questions may be asked on topics such as economic goals and objectives, level and type of foreign investment in the community, experience with foreign exchanges, level of tourism travel to and from the area, level of interest in B.C. and Canada, and so forth. The list of questions should be concise and focused, but should be structured to allow the twinning organization to obtain the information necessary to inform the decision-making process.

Part of the value of the letter is that it allows the community to get a good sense of the candidate's level of interest in, and probable commitment to, a twinning arrangement. A perfunctory response to the letter may indicate a lack of enthusiasm, and may cause the twinning organization to question a long-term, formal relationship with that community. Conversely, an enthusiastic response may indicate a high level of interest, and could be viewed positively.

If support exists, twinning organizations may wish to invest in visits to the short-listed candidates. Such trips enable representatives to gather information, and to gain a first-hand appreciation of the opportunities available. In addition, face-to-face meetings with counterparts allow representatives to better gauge the interest in, and commitment to, a twinning arrangement. The City of Richmond's Sister City Committee sent representatives to four short-listed candidate communities in early 2007 in an effort to identify the best match (see Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 4 – TOWARDS AN ARRANGEMENT

Once the preferred twinning candidate has been selected, the twinning needs to be formally established. This chapter outlines suggested steps for proponents to follow when working towards an official twinning arrangement.

Mayor Wilfried Vicktor, District of Hope

"We very much appreciate the fellowship we have, with our brothers and sisters across the waters."

Three steps towards an agreement are:

- the formal invitation to the selected candidate to develop a twinning arrangement
- discussions with the selected partner community to set terms for the relationship
- signing the official twinning agreement

It is important that cultural education be provided for members of the B.C. community who wish to participate in the twinning relationship. Helping people to understand the culture with which they will be engaged is an ongoing exercise that extends beyond the steps outlined in this chapter. The need for such education becomes particularly apparent during the discussions around joint goals and objectives. For that reason, cultural education is introduced and discussed in this part of the *Tool Kit*.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Successful international twinning arrangements are long-term commitments. The terms that define the arrangements must be considered carefully before any formal documents are signed. Proponents must be prepared to spend the time and resources necessary to develop terms that:

- are acceptable to both communities
- commit the groups to pursuing tangible opportunities and benefits
- allow the relationship to grow and evolve

Meaningful arrangements — that is, arrangements that move the participants beyond mere words — take time.

Formal Invitation

The first step for the twinning organization is to issue a formal invitation to the selected candidate city to develop an official twinning arrangement. The letter of invitation should be sent from the Mayor to their counterpart, even in cases where the twinning organization exists at arm's length to Council. The Mayor is the head of Council, and the chief elected official of the community. An invitation directly from the Mayor, on behalf of the twinning organization and the broader community, will give the effort the profile it demands in Asian culture. A letter sent by an official, other than the Mayor (e.g., Chair of the twinning organization), may cause leaders in the selected Asia Pacific community to question the seriousness of the undertaking.

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

"Friendship" vs. "Twin"

The twinning organization may wish to propose the establishment of "Friendship Relationships" with short-listed cities that are not selected as the preferred candidate. Friendship relationships are demonstrations of goodwill that do not carry the same level of commitment or obligation as twinning arrangements (sister city relationships). It is common for cities, both in Asia and North America, to have several official friendship relationships, but only a handful of formal twinning arrangements.

A friendship relationship is also a possibility in cases where twinning discussions with the preferred candidate do not produce the anticipated results. Friendship relationships, too, may be suitable in cases where the Asian community already has a Canadian sister city. Cities typically have only one sister city per country.

Friendship relationships can be upgraded over time to twinning arrangements if the partners so choose. The City of Richmond's sister city policy requires friendship relationships to either advance to full sister city status within five years, or be cancelled.

The letter of invitation sent by the Mayor is, at this point, merely an invitation to come together in the development of a twinning arrangement. Put differently, it is an invitation to enter into formal discussions aimed at developing a formal arrangement. It is not an invitation to sign an actual twinning agreement. Either community may decide at some point during discussions that the match is not optimal, despite the results of earlier assessments. Should this conclusion be reached, the twinning organization needs to be able to step back from the discussions.

At the same time that the Mayor contacts the preferred candidate, letters should be sent to the short-listed candidates who were not chosen thanking them for their interest. These letters should be sent by the Mayor as a show of respect for the other communities.

FIGURE 4.1

Terms to Consider

Term	Description
Purpose	– what is the specific purpose of the arrangement
Focus	– what are the goals and objectives on which the parties wish to focus (e.g., economic development related to tourism, environmental services, sustainable agriculture and specialized education)
Contacts	– how the parties pledge to communicate with one another
Delegations	– how often each party sends an official delegation – who is included (e.g., Mayor, business leaders, etc.) – what the hosting obligations are
Exchanges	– do the parties wish to encourage educational, cultural and other exchanges (recommended) – how often, and how many participants – responsibilities of host
Subsidiary Agreements	– how the parties will encourage and facilitate the establishment of subsidiary agreements between individual businesses, educational centres, organizations, authorities, etc., in the communities – which specific agreements to target early
Review	– how, and how frequently, the parties agree to review the terms of the relationship

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Travel to the Region

Wherever possible, a delegation sent to discuss terms should take its own interpreter. The terms being established will, in most cases, commit the twinning organization and local government to many years of effort and investment. Delegates involved in discussions need to be confident that they fully understand the discussions that occur.

Delegations should also be careful to ensure that they cover their own expenses, and do not rely on their Asian hosts. During discussions on the terms of the agreement, delegates should not feel constrained by a sense of obligation to the other party.

Setting Terms

The twinning organization should undertake, with input from stakeholder groups, a strategic planning exercise aimed at determining what exactly the community wants to achieve from the twinning arrangement. The challenge for the twinning organization will be to work with its counterpart in the selected country to develop terms that enable not only the B.C. community to achieve its goals, but the Asian community to achieve its goals as well.

In developing the terms, thought needs to be given to a number of points. Figure 4.1 on the previous page identifies key items to consider.

There may be a temptation to set vague, general terms in twinning arrangements. It is suggested, however, that twinning organizations spend the time required working with their Asia Pacific counterparts to define specific parameters. An agreement that commits the parties to pursuing specific opportunities in "tourism" or "higher education" or "environmental services", for example, will be of more value (and easier to assess) than one which simply refers to "commercial opportunities". Terms dealing with delegations and exchanges are also important to set out in detail. Both parties should clearly understand the obligations and limitations surrounding the hosting and funding of visits.

Generally, the bulk of the work required to draft the terms will be carried out by staff officials who report to the Asian community's Mayor. While the Mayor of the Asian community will ultimately review and approve the terms; they will not normally participate in discussions leading to the terms of the agreement. This may be important for the B.C. community to consider in selecting individuals to use in discussions. Senior staff officials from the twinning organization and/or the local government may be best suited to dealing with their Asian staff counterparts. Outside advisors with Asian language skills and/or experience working on twinning arrangements may also be useful to include. Experts from organizations such as BCIT's *International Business Services* department would be particularly useful to engage at this stage.

Where funding allows, organizations may consider travelling to the region for face-to-face discussions. A decision to send a delegation for discussions would serve to emphasize the importance of the arrangement to the B.C. community. In addition, face-to-face meetings tend to expedite the process, while at the same time minimize the potential for miscommunication and confusion that sometimes exists with electronic communication.

Formalizing the Arrangement

Once the terms of the relationship have been established to the satisfaction of both parties, the twinning arrangement is ready to be formalized. The twinning organization and local government should, at this point, be prepared to send an official delegation to Asia to sign the agreement.[2]

2 In some cases, the Asian partner community will send a delegation to B.C. for the signing. The B.C. partner should be *prepared* to travel to Asia, but may not be required to do so.

The delegation should be headed by the Mayor, and could include several key individuals from the community, including:

- the chair/president of the twinning organization
- local business leaders (e.g., president of the Board of Trade, or Chamber of Commerce)
- top education officials (e.g., senior university/college/polytechnic officials; School District Chair)
- regional politicians (e.g., Regional District Chair)
- senior local government staff (e.g., City Manager)

The documents to be signed by will reflect the terms of the relationship as determined jointly by the parties. In some past cases, documents have been very brief (e.g., one page) and vague. It is suggested that more detailed agreements be used so that all of the specific terms can be included and promoted.

The title of the key document may refer to a "Sister City Agreement" or a "Twinning Arrangement" — for all intents and purposes, the terms are synonymous and interchangeable.

The term "Friendship Relationship" is not synonymous with the others, and should therefore not be used interchangeably. Friendship relationships (or any document containing the term "friendship") are demonstrations of goodwill, but do not carry the same level of commitment or obligation as twinning arrangements or sister city relationships.

Friendship agreements are fine as expressions of goodwill. A community that expended the resources required to systematically follow the twinning steps outlined in this *Tool Kit*, however, would not likely view a friendship agreement as a suitable alternative to a full twinning arrangement or sister city relationship.

FIGURE 4.2

Required Education

Item	Details
Government	– how city government is structured (e.g., strong mayor, council-manager) – governance (e.g., who makes decisions) – how cities relate to senior levels of government and other authorities (e.g., Party Congresses in China) – the role of cities (e.g., in China) in running commercial enterprises – elections and election cycles
Economy	– how the economy has changed, locally, regionally and nationally in recent times – prevailing economic priorities – key differences in economic systems (e.g., market-based vs. centrally-planned) – restrictions on, and opportunities for, trade and investment
History	– the recent and longer-term history of the community, region and country – the history of relations with Canada, and with the West in general – are there historical links specifically between the partners
People	– demographics – key customs and traditions – languages used – education and income levels – the level of personal freedom (freedom of expression, travel, etc.)
Doing Business	– how correspondence should be handled – how are meetings conducted – what should be known about security in business arrangements
Business Etiquette	– how should officials be greeted – the importance of exchanging gifts; and gifts that are deemed most appropriate – the importance of socializing with prospective partners – expectations of hosts and guests – etiquette surrounding meals – pitfalls to avoid

Cultural Education

In order to capitalize on the potential for increased trade, cultural and educational opportunities, political, business and other community leaders must learn and understand more about Asia Pacific. Many leaders and citizens share an emerging sense of Asia Pacific's economic potential but a better understanding of the region and its cultures is needed if B.C. is to play a strong role in Asia Pacific.

Proponents of twinning arrangements, in particular, need to understand the culture with which they plan to twin. Essential subject areas are listed on the previous page in Figure 4.2.

Mayor Terry Lake, City of Kamloops

"With many Asian cultures, it's all about relationships, and let's face it, it's just the same in Canada – people feel much more comfortable doing business with people they know and trust."

Spending time in Asia Pacific allows individuals to develop a first-hand appreciation of key cultures, and is an important part of the education process.

There are other ways, however, that leaders and proponents of twinning can become educated. *Venture Kamloops* (www.venturekamloops.com), for example, recently sponsored a workshop for local business leaders on "Doing Business in China" (see Chapter 7). The *Asia Pacific Foundation* has offered to work closely with communities to assist them in better understanding Asia Pacific cultures. Post-secondary institutions, such as BCIT's *International Business Services*, are also developing and providing various learning modules and materials to those interested in doing business in Asia Pacific.

Cultural knowledge about Asia Pacific is important for twinning proponents to acquire in advance of the twinning process. Knowledge about the region is also important for all British Columbians to acquire over the longer term. The 21st Century is the Pacific Century for B.C. and to succeed, British Columbians must recognize that B.C. is an integral part of the economic and cultural fabric of the Asia Pacific region.

Perhaps the most important places in which to develop this Asia Pacific mindset are B.C.'s schools and post-secondary institutions, where future generations of British Columbians are being educated. Efforts to include student exchanges as a component of Asia Pacific twinning arrangements may pay dividends, and should be considered.

CHAPTER 5 – MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL

The formal arrangement is an important document and its signing is a considerable achievement. However, the formal arrangement is simply the mechanism, or vehicle, that allows the participating communities to work together towards mutual goals and benefits. It is the framework put in place to promote and support the development of agreements and exchanges between companies, educational institutes and people in the different jurisdictions. It is an agreement through which the two communities commit to a mutually-beneficial, long-term relationship.

Mayor Scott Nelson, City of Williams Lake

"This is the first time we have established a direct economic relationship with China to develop business opportunities. Companies at Williams Lake are very excited about this initiative and we are expecting long-term mutual benefits and economic development for both communities from this project."

The formal arrangement may be best thought of as an opportunity. To maximize the arrangement's potential, proponents need to make ongoing efforts, including those aimed at:

- building the profile of the B.C. partner and the twinning relationship among decision-makers in the Asia Pacific community
- expanding the level of support for, and involvement in, the relationship at home
- reviewing, with the Asian partner, the arrangement and its terms

WHAT TO EXPECT

The work for proponents of a twinning initiative does not stop once the formal arrangement has been signed; indeed, it may be that the formal signing marks only the beginning of the job. Ongoing effort and resources are required to maximize the potential of the arrangement.

The Mayor, as the head of Council, has an important role to play in these ongoing efforts, particularly in helping to build the profile of the community (and the twinning arrangement) overseas, and in generating support at home. The Mayor needs to champion the arrangement on an ongoing basis, and lend the prestige of their office to key events and efforts.

Building Profile Overseas

To maximize the potential of the twinning arrangement, it is important that the B.C. community remains in the forefront of the minds of Asian decision-makers. Profile can be enhanced in a number of ways. A simple way is through regular correspondence between key players, particularly the Mayors. Following simple protocol, such as recognizing key holidays and events, is important to building relationships.

Face-to-face contact is the most effective way of sustaining a high profile. To that end, various delegations and exchanges may be organized. Delegations to the Asia Pacific twin could include (either together, or on separate, focused missions):

- the Mayor and members of Council
- representatives of the local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade
- representatives of firms active in a key, targeted industry (e.g., value-added forestry products, environmental services, biotechnology, etc.)
- elected officials and business people from the broader economic region
- representatives of education providers (e.g., school districts, post-secondary institutions)
- secondary, post-secondary students and interested citizens

Regularly-scheduled delegations are featured in many twinning arrangements and are considered effective at strengthening relationships. Periodic, special delegations are also useful.

Delegations, by their nature, tend to involve large numbers of people. Individuals, however, can also help to build profile overseas. Growing numbers of British Columbians travel to Asia Pacific for work and/or pleasure. In local post-secondary institutions it is common to find faculty members who travel frequently throughout the region for their research and/or teaching programs. Appealing to these individuals to serve as "community ambassadors" can be an effective — and cost-effective — way to keep the communities in touch. Informal visits to deliver greetings (e.g., in the form of a letter) from the B.C. Mayor to their counterpart in the Asian community can help to deepen and personalize relations.

Expanding Local Support and Involvement

Widespread local support for, and involvement in, a twinning relationship helps a community maximize the potential benefit of the arrangement.

Student exchanges, both at the secondary and post-secondary levels, allow significant numbers of people to experience, first-hand, the value of international arrangements. Their experiences typically prompt the students and their families to become firm supporters of the relationship. These exchanges also allow participants to develop the cultural awareness and confidence required to work and succeed internationally. Most existing twinning arrangements (see Chapter 7) feature student exchanges.

Another way to increase local support and involvement is to work to help local companies identify future trends and opportunities. For example, Canadian officials are optimistic that in the near future Canada will receive Approved Destination Status (ADS) from China. If ADS is granted, there will be significant opportunities for B.C. tourism providers to develop specialty programs (e.g., cultural tourism, culinary tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism) that appeal to China's rapidly growing and sophisticated middle class. Similar efforts can be made to attract India's middle class, which is expected to grow to 500 million people by 2025. Specialty tourism providers in many B.C. communities have an opportunity to get ahead of the curve.

Local service groups, NGOs and other organizations are also important to involve in twinning efforts. The enthusiasm that many of these groups bring to twinning initiatives helps to keep the relationship vibrant. For example, the strength of the City of Penticton's twinning arrangement with Ikeda, Japan is explained, at least in part, by the involvement and support of a large number of community organizations. The same can be said of the City of Quesnel's relationship with Shiraoi, Japan (see Chapter 7).

Reviewing the Agreement[3]

Any agreement that sets out terms of participation, and commits participants to specific goals and objectives, should be reviewed periodically to ensure ongoing support by both parties. Some types of arrangements (e.g., certain regional service arrangements, developed through regional districts) should be reviewed frequently, perhaps every three-to-five years. International twinning arrangements, conversely, should be reviewed less frequently — perhaps once every eight-to-ten years. Twinning arrangements represent long-term commitments and typically the benefits from such arrangements take many years to materialize.

Reviews should be conducted with the partner community and should assess all of the terms that were developed for the arrangement, including:

- the purpose of the arrangement
- goals and objectives
- communications between the parties
- delegations
- exchanges
- handling of subsidiary agreements
- review provisions

Cancelling an Arrangement

In some cases, twinned communities may allow their arrangement to become inactive. The possible reasons for allowing such a situation to occur might include:

- political change in one or both of the communities
- change in priorities on the part of either participant
- change in provincial, state or national priorities
- a poor experience early in the relationship that persists

In cases where arrangements begin to fade, there may be a temptation on the part of the B.C. community to cancel the arrangement, if only as a housekeeping matter. Such a temptation, should be resisted.

To the B.C. community, the decision to cancel the arrangement may seem logical — a simple business decision that recognizes the prevailing situation. To the Asia Pacific partner, however, this decision may be viewed differently. The decision may be perceived as heavy-handed and unnecessary, and may cause officials to lose face. A loss of face could, in turn, have extensive and unintended repercussions for Canadian businesses and individuals (e.g., students) who have successfully pursued opportunities under the twinning arrangement.

Twinning relationships, like all relationships, experience high and low points. Over the course of several years, the benefits from such relationships may change; rarely will they disappear altogether, even when the relationship appears to be inactive.

3 This section deals specifically with the need to jointly review the terms of participation outlined by the parties in the formal agreement. The need for the B.C. community to undertake its own assessment of the twinning arrangement is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 – MEASURING PROGRESS

Well-structured twinning arrangements require both initial and ongoing investments of resources, including time, energy and money. How do proponents know if they are getting a good return on their investments? This chapter examines this question.

Mayor Sharon Shepherd, City of Kelowna

"I can wholeheartedly testify that these relationships have strengthened our community economically, culturally and environmentally and we hope to continue to foster them."

Importance of Assessment

Local governments and twinning organizations will want to monitor and assess their twinning arrangements to:

- determine whether outcomes are generally commensurate with inputs
- track progress towards stated goals and objectives
- identify opportunities to enhance and improve the arrangements
- understand and limit exposure to risk, including liability
- establish baseline data for ongoing reporting processes

Twinning arrangements will take different forms, emphasize different community goals and objectives, and require varying levels of investment. Contrasts in the degree of commitment and other factors will influence the need for assessment in each case, as will the nature of anticipated outputs and outcomes. In general, an effective assessment program will be important in all cases. Such a program will point to areas of demonstrated success, as well as to areas that need to be reconsidered. In pointing out both the positive and negative, the assessment process will help to build public confidence in twinning, and specific twinning arrangements, as valuable tools for economic development.

Challenges

Efforts to assess twinning arrangements will face unique challenges, including:

- a longer than normal delay between investments and benefits
- the need to use both qualitative and quantitative methods
- the difficulty in attributing specific outcomes to twinning efforts
- problems posed by the fact that communities are "open systems", subject to the free flow and interplay of a range of factors

The delay challenge is important to highlight. When assessing twinning arrangements, it is important to remember that many of the anticipated benefits will be realized over the medium- to longer-term. A minimum five-year of commitment is required

by twinning partners before they can expect to see much return on their investment. Ongoing *monitoring* of activities can — and should — be undertaken; *detailed assessment* of the twinning arrangements, however, should wait.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to measure progress is important. Over the longer term, twinning may yield tangible benefits such as new commercial investment and tourism visitations — these benefits can be measured. There will be other outcomes, however, such as cultural enrichment, that are best assessed in qualitative terms. For many communities, twinning is about *development* rather than *growth*. Development includes outcomes such as social benefits, increased awareness of markets and employment opportunities, and the potential for economic diversification (and a reduced dependency on traditional resource-based activities). In general, *outputs* related to growth are amenable to quantitative analysis; *outcomes*, related to development, are better suited to qualitative measures.

In many respects, program assessment remains, underdeveloped in public policy and administration. Few, if any, models of assessment have been specifically developed for twinning arrangements. Regardless, it is important to subject the activities undertaken in support of twinning arrangements to some formal and regular process of assessment.

Such assessments will also enable "course corrections" when an activity is not performing as well as expected. Making these course corrections will increase the legitimacy of such arrangements and help them to become recognized as a worthwhile function of local government in B.C.

Benefits to Measure

There are three broad classes of benefits associated with twinning arrangements: economic, socio-cultural and educational. None of these classes is entirely discrete — areas of overlap exist between and among them. Each does, however, comprise a major domain.

➤ ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Figure 6.1 on page 34 identifies key economic benefits that may result from twinning arrangements. Comments on measuring the impacts are included in the table.

Some economic benefits can be measured in standard quantitative terms; others can be evaluated using qualitative measures. As suggested earlier, quantitative methods are not necessarily better than the qualitative efforts. In some instances, qualitative assessments may be more valid, particularly where quantitative methods tend to exaggerate results.[4]

There is also a need to differentiate between economic *benefits* and economic *impacts*. Benefits involve an identification of positive outputs and outcomes, and possibly a measure of the ratio between investments and yields. Impacts reflect costs (including opportunity costs) as well as benefits.

➤ SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS

Twinning relationships may provide important socio-cultural benefits for local communities and regions. Such benefits are valuable in their own right, but also tend to help set the stage for downstream economic benefits. Key socio-cultural benefits include:

- the enhanced cultural awareness for individuals, and the community at large, that results from greater contact and interaction with foreign cultures
- increased confidence on the part of individuals to operate in international spheres
- increased levels of travel and tourism resulting from greater cultural awareness

4 There is a tendency, for example, to overstate the multiplier effect of expenditures. Most experts would be skeptical of any multiplier over 2.0, and would dismiss outright multiplier effects in excess of 5.0.

FIGURE 6.1

Potential Economic Benefits to Measure

Potential Benefit	Comments on Methods
Investment • investment in business and industry • investment in buildings and infrastructure	• tracked using development and building permits figures
Expenditure • includes spending associated with tourism and convention activity, which can be traced wholly or in part to twinning relationships • includes purchase of local goods and services	• estimates derived using common multipliers • data may be readily available from specialty organizations (e.g., International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus)
Business Start-ups • new business formations that can be attributed to twinning relationships • partnerships and less formal collaborations	• may be necessary to obtain the agreement of principals, although parties may be quite content to have these arrangements made public
Incomes • including employment income, incomes from consultancy work, transfers, and so forth	• difficult to track in a comprehensive manner, but can be addressed using examples
New "Economic Knowledge Capital" • market intelligence and knowledge of international business cultures/practices that come from twinning exchanges and enhanced international connectivity	• this benefit will likely require qualitative assessment, perhaps using examples or case studies
Economic Diversification • industrial diversification (new industries not tied directly to staple or other traditional industries) • employment diversification (demand for labour in these new industries) • market diversification (new relationships with clients and partners in international markets)	• likely require significant resources for assessment • may be assessed with the assistance of local university or college personnel as part of an internship or co-op exercise, practicum, or other form of *pro bono* service
Threshold Effects • new business accruing from twinning helps to build the scale of local/regional economies required for increased specialization	• procedures for estimating changes in industrial specialization indices could be included as elements of broader work on economic diversification

Travel and tourism levels — which may be examples of downstream economic benefits resulting from socio-cultural benefits — can be measured in quantitative ways.[5] Other socio-cultural benefits may be assessed qualitatively using some form of community survey and/or case studies.

➤ EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Educational benefits represent a principal outcome of many twinning arrangements. Educational exchanges also represent an important platform for economic and social relations, in that they:

- build trust among partnered communities
- open opportunities of enrichment for a larger segment of the community than just the business sector
- provide a long-term basis for mutual relations and exchange

Key educational benefits of twinning may include the following:

- exchanges for middle school, secondary and post-secondary students that stimulate interest in foreign cultures and societies
- opportunities for community members to learn about international cultures and markets, both from visiting students and as members of exchange groups
- reciprocal learning about comparative educational models
- the potential for curriculum enrichment in schools and post-secondary institutions that participate in exchange programs
- the potential for joint and/or collaborative educational programming (e.g., via distance learning)
- the potential for B.C. post-secondary institutions to provide B.C. programming to students in their home countries
- direct and indirect economic investment

Some of these educational benefits can be measured quantitatively (e.g., the number and frequency of student exchanges; the number of students involved). Other benefits are more amenable to qualitative methods (e.g., reports from students about their experiences; community surveys; dialogue with partner institutions overseas).

The discussion of educational benefits would not be complete without highlighting the economic benefits associated with international students registered at B.C.'s schools and post-secondary institutions. Information recently collected by the Ministry of Economic Development suggests that international students registered in B.C. inject in excess of $800 million per year into local economies. K-12 international students account for $220 million of this total, or $25,000 per student. Post-secondary students, each of whom annually spends an average of $32,550, make up the remainder.

These numbers cannot be attributed solely to twinning arrangements. Twinning initiatives do, however, contribute to broader efforts aimed at raising the profile of B.C.'s educational programs and opportunities among target groups in partner Asian communities, and throughout the broader Asia Pacific region. In addition, the international awareness that develops within B.C. communities involved in twinning relationships encourages local school districts and institutions to reach out and seek Asia Pacific students.

5 In considering the overall impact of such travel, however, it would be important to also consider the visits from the B.C. community to foreign destinations. These visits would represent a form of income leakage.

Generic Approach to Assessment

To some degree, the nature of assessment efforts will vary in each case according to the scope of the twinning arrangement, and the expectations of the participants. A generic approach, however, would include the following components:

- identification of the specific benefits to measure
- development of a suite of indicators
- establishment and monitoring of benchmarks
- development of a process for monitoring, on an ongoing basis, progress towards achieving the benefits
- publication of annual reports on the twinning effort
- a major assessment after five years
- a strategic evaluation after ten years

The remainder of this section elaborates on some of these components.

➤ ANNUAL REPORTS

Given that twinning arrangements typically yield results over the medium- to longer-terms, annual reports may only include partial or fragmentary data. They can, however, feature useful observations and qualitative information on planned exchanges, educational initiatives, and other efforts.

➤ MAJOR FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT

Five years — the minimum period of commitment noted earlier — will not likely be a sufficient length of time during which to maximize the potential value of twinning arrangements. It is reasonable, however, to expect significant signs of progress over this period. It should also be possible to determine if the twinning relationship is moving forward towards the realization of key areas of benefit.

A major assessment would typically include some form of *impact assessment*, as well as a more comprehensive inventory of program activities. An impact assessment would require the development of formal estimates of costs and benefits associated with the twinning initiative.

The five-year analysis would allow decision-makers to measure progress toward key goals, identify areas of strength and concern, and determine the direction for the next phase of the twinning relationship. An analysis that raised serious concerns may not result in the termination of the relationship. Such an analysis could, however, prompt a change in the nature of the relationship and/or the level of ongoing investment.

➤ STRATEGIC TEN-YEAR EVALUATION

For some twinning arrangements, five-year analyses may be adequate. For others, a more strategic evaluation may be required after a longer period, such as ten years. Ten-year strategic evaluations may be particularly appropriate for twinning arrangements that have broad scopes of activity, and in cases where significant developmental outcomes are targeted. Such developmental outcomes may include:

- economic diversification, in terms of industries, employment, products, sales and revenue sources
- enhanced cultural awareness, which could be tested in part by selective surveys of businesses, educational institutions, and community groups
- business development and international opportunities for community members, as well as for the community at large

CHAPTER 7 – PROFILES OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

This chapter profiles the Asia Pacific twinning experiences of communities in B.C.[6] Ten communities are featured:

- City of Burnaby
- City of Castlegar
- City of Kamloops
- Town of Lake Cowichan
- City of Merritt
- City of Penticton
- City of Port Moody
- City of Quesnel
- City of Richmond
- City of Victoria

These communities do not comprise the definitive list of B.C. communities involved in twinning relationships. They are however, representative of the types of Asian twinning activities taking place around the province. In selecting the communities, efforts were made to achieve a degree of representation in terms of population size and geographic distribution.

Observations

Before turning to the profiles, it is useful to offer some general observations on the twinning experiences:

- All of the profiled communities have focused their Asian twinning efforts on Japan. However, more recently, the focus is shifting towards China. No community in B.C., to date, has established formal ties with India or South Korea. This situation is anticipated to change in the years ahead. India, which is quickly emerging as an economic powerhouse, has strong connections (through Indian migration) with many B.C. communities and South Korea is becoming increasingly important to the province as a trading partner. Already, B.C.'s overall benefit from trade with South Korea is on par with that of China.
- The longest-standing twinning relationships are with Japanese communities. This situation reflects the concerted post-war effort by the Japanese Government to promote and foster goodwill relationships with Western countries and further the strong economic linkages between B.C. and Japan.
- Few of the arrangements with Japanese communities were initiated to promote mutual economic development — cultural and educational activities were, and remain, the focus of the arrangements. Economic benefits have emerged in many instances as a result.

6 This chapter maintains the Asia Pacific focus of the *Tool kit*. Twinning arrangements that may exist with communities in other parts of the world are not profiled here.

- China is the focus of most new twinning initiatives currently being pursued by B.C. communities. There is, however, growing interest in, and potential for, twinning with communities in both South Korea and India. In contrast to many Japanese twinning agreements, arrangements with Chinese communities tend to focus on economic objectives.
- Finally, the ten profiles illustrate that twinning arrangements in British Columbia have evolved organically over time. However, the current efforts of Richmond, Kamloops and Port Moody demonstrate that initiatives benefit from a certain amount of rigour and structure.

City of Burnaby

Twinned with Kushiro, Japan (1965)

The City of Burnaby (population 205,500) is B.C.'s third largest city, located at the centre of Metro Vancouver.

Burnaby is home to a mix of major manufacturing operations, both high-tech and resource-based. The City has high-density residential areas, major commercial town centres, rapid transit, high technology research and business parks, movie and television studio facilities, and industrial estates. Both Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the British Columbia Institute of Technology have their main campuses in Burnaby.

Burnaby twinned with the City of Kushiro, Japan in 1965.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

Burnaby's four decade-old twinning relationship with Kushiro remains active. Official visits occur, on average, once every five years, often coinciding with special events or major cultural activities in the host city. City staff exchanges have also taken place.

Since the outset of the relationship, parties have made efforts to identify specific areas of common interest. One such area has been, and continues to be, the natural environment. Kushiro is well known for its large wetland area, and is recognized for its wetland preservation efforts. The two communities share a program called "stream of dreams".

Education is an important element of the twinning relationship. Secondary school exchanges occur regularly. At the post-secondary level, SFU has a partnership with Kushiro City University.

➤ ORGANIZATION

The sister city relationship with Kushiro is managed directly by City Hall. The school exchanges that occur are managed by school district representatives. City staff act as the conduit for sharing information with community organizations and agencies on both sides of the partnership.

➤ INVESTMENT

The City of Burnaby budgets $5,000 a year towards expenses for all of its international sister city activities, including those related specifically to the arrangement with Kushiro.[7] The sister city funds are used to support exchanges and provide materials for identified programs.

Special budget requests are made when a Burnaby delegation plans to visit Kushiro, or when funds are needed to cover hosting expenses for visiting Kushiro representatives.

➤ BENEFITS

The Burnaby-Kushiro twinning arrangement is rooted in the philosophy that twinning has intrinsic, long-term benefits to the community. It is viewed by both parties as a tool to promote education and cultural awareness, primarily among the communities' youth (students in Burnaby and their counterparts in Kushiro keep in constant contact through an "electronic pen-pal" program).

The communities also benefit under the arrangement from the exchange of ideas. A 2005 report to Burnaby City Council noted that the forthcoming visit of the Mayor of Kushiro would provide an opportunity for elected officials to discuss *"...the challenges of growth, the need for economic diversity, transportation, affordable housing and meeting the day-to-day needs of our respective citizens".*

7 Burnaby has two international sister cities outside of Asia Pacific.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

In May 2007, Burnaby's Mayor participated in a ten-person Burnaby Board of Trade economic development mission to China. Over the course of the visit, several cities emerged as twinning candidates. A process is now underway to determine how Burnaby should proceed with respect to these candidates.

In China, the Burnaby Board of Trade signed a wide-reaching MOU with the Zhuhai Foreign Affairs Office that includes:

"...the promotion of mutual exchanges and cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science, technology, culture, education, sports and public health; the creation of opportunities for the members of the Burnaby Board of Trade and business people in Zhuhai; and the facilitation of the exchange of information between the two parties."

➤ OBSERVATIONS

Twinning between Burnaby and Kushiro is robust, with most of the activity focused on educational institutions and City Hall.

➤ CONTACT

City of Burnaby
Office of the Mayor
604.294.7944
www.city.burnaby.bc.ca

City of Castlegar

Twinned with Embetsu, Japan (1989) and Yueyang, China (1991)

The City of Castlegar (population 7,800) is located in the Kootenays, midway between Vancouver and Calgary, Alberta.

Castlegar's economy features manufacturing, retail trade and education. Major employers include Teck Cominco (located in nearby Trail), Celgar Pulp and Selkirk College. The area in and around Castlegar has exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities, which form the basis of the region's tourism industry.

The twinning of Castlegar with Embetsu, Japan occurred in 1989 with the assistance of the President of Selkirk College. Embetsu is a town of 4,000 on the northern tip of the island of Hokkaido. The production of foodstuffs, including rice, fruit, vegetables and seafood is important to the area's economy.

The twinning with Yueyang, China took place in 1991. Yueyang, located in the northeast of Hunan Province, is considerably larger than Castlegar with a population of 4.5 million.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS

The City of Castlegar's twinning with Embetsu began with an agreement involving Aoyama Technical College and Selkirk College. Embetsu was the home town of Aoyama's President. Prompted by officials from both institutions, Castlegar municipal officials travelled to Embetsu in 1989 to sign a sister city agreement. Embetsu is a rural town that has little in common economically with Castlegar. Their differences, however, have not deterred the parties from forging a strong relationship.

To assist the two communities, the President of Aoyama Technical College granted a personal loan of $200,000 for use towards student exchanges. The funds were deposited with the Selkirk College Foundation. In 1998, exchanges began under the official Castlegar-Embetsu Educational Exchange Program. In that year, eight students travelled from Castlegar to Embetsu. In 1999, Castlegar welcomed six students from Embetsu.

The Castlegar-Embetsu twinning arrangement is focused on culture and education rather than economic development.

The twinning of Castlegar and Yueyang, China occurred as the result of the China International Trust and Investment Company's (CITIC) purchase of 50% of Castlegar's local pulp mill in 1990. CITIC's connections facilitated introductions of officials from the two communities.

Yueyang, like Castlegar, has a pulp mill and college. When the cities twinned, the colleges followed suit and partnered with one another. The college link remains active today; the city-to-city link, however, has waned.

➤ ORGANIZATION

In 1997, Castlegar formed the Castlegar-Embetsu Educational Exchange Committee to manage the relationship with Embetsu. This Committee falls under the sponsorship of the independent Castlegar Arts Council.

To the extent that it requires management (it is largely inactive), the Castlegar-Yueyang arrangement is overseen directly by City Hall.

➤ INVESTMENT

City Council and the local business community strongly support the community's twinning initiative with Embetsu. This support is demonstrated, among other ways, by their involvement with the most recent Embetsu student delegation.

The Selkirk College Foundation has made the Embetsu exchange program financially viable through the years.

➤ BENEFITS

Selkirk College's relationship with Aoyama Technical College, along with its relationship with the nearby Konan College in Nagoya, features an annual summer education program. Under this program, 30-50 Japanese students participate in six to eight weeks of language training in Castlegar.

The Embetsu twinning arrangement — and, to a lesser extent, the less active arrangement with Yueyang — has helped Selkirk College develop its international student programs, which contribute an estimated $4 to $5 million each year to the local economy.

Direct economic benefits aside, the relationship between Castlegar and Embetsu has given more than 70 students from the communities exposure to another culture, and the confidence required to work internationally. The cultural and educational benefits to the participants and their communities are considered significant. They may also help to set the stage for longer-term economic benefits.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

Continued nurturing of the sister city relationship with Embetsu is planned. The Yueyang relationship has waned, however some community leaders in Castlegar (e.g., Selkirk College officials) are interested in renewing the connection.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

Castlegar is fortunate to have the financial resources required to support the relationship with Embetsu, and to ensure the continued exchange of students. The active involvement of Selkirk College helps to sustain the community's profile in Japan, and generates real benefits — economic and otherwise — for the community.

More than 15 years have passed since the twinning arrangement with Yueyang was established. Because Selkirk College continues to have an active Chinese exchange program in place with Yueyang, it may be possible to revitalize the twinning relationship between the cities.

➤ CONTACT

City of Castlegar
Office of the Mayor
250.365.7227
www.castlegar.ca

City of Kamloops

Twinned with Uji, Japan (1990) and Changping District of Beijing, China (2005)

The City of Kamloops (population 84,000) is located in south central British Columbia, at the confluence of the two branches of the Thompson River. Major industries include primary resource processing facilities, cement manufacturing plants, educational institutes, call centres and mining operations. The B.C. Lottery Corporation is also located in this city. Kamloops is a transportation hub, with connections to Highways 5 and 97C, the Trans-Canada Highway and the Yellowhead Highway. It is the first major city east of Chilliwack, and is home to a small international airport. Thompson Rivers University (TRU) is based in Kamloops.

Kamloops is twinned with Uji, Japan, a city that is situated on the outskirts of Kyoto. Kamioops also has a relationship with Changping, a District of Beijing in China.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS

July 1990 marked the formal signing of the sister city agreement between the City of Kamloops and the City of Uji, Japan. The purpose of the agreement was to enhance mutual understanding between the citizens of both cities through educational, cultural, sports and economic exchange. The Uji connection has been, and remains, principally focused on education and student exchanges. The partnership was affirmed by the parties on its 10th anniversary in 2000.

In 2005 the Mayor of Kamloops on behalf of the City, signed a Friendly City Protocol Exchange with Changping District, a suburb of Beijing. At the same time, the Mayor witnessed the signing of two letters of intent specifically focused on trade and tourism development. The first letter involved the Commerce Bureau of Changping and Changping District, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Venture Kamloops and the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce. The second letter was between the Tourism Bureau of Changping District and Tourism Kamloops. During a subsequent visit in October, 2007, an addendum on education exchange was signed.

Because Kamloops wants to maximize its efforts in China, the City has decided that future twinning requests from other countries will be declined.

➤ ORGANIZATION

The relationship with Uji is managed by a community committee chaired by the Mayor. Every second year the Mayor heads a multi-party delegation to Uji. The Mayor also organizes the placement of teachers in Uji to teach English. Thompson Rivers University – World, (TRU-W) the international arm of the university, participates in the twinning arrangement, in part to promote its international education programs. TRU has a strong partnership with Kyoto Bunkyo College in Uji.

Venture Kamloops, the marketing and economic development arm of the City of Kamloops, is responsible for managing the agreement between the City and Changping. Venture Kamloops is operated, at arm's-length to the City, by a seven-person board of directors. Two seats on the board are filled by members of City Council (the Mayor serves as one of Council's appointees at present). Venture Kamloops receives 90% of its $500,000 annual budget directly from the City. The international twinning project with Changping is only one of the organization's many activities.

➤ INVESTMENT

A great deal of the success of Venture Kamloops' China initiatives is dependent on the development of opportunities in tourism. These opportunities, in turn, are contingent upon Canada receiving Approved Destination Status (ADS) from China. Once ADS is in place, Kamloops will be well-positioned to take advantage of the potential tourism boom.

In an effort to help Kamloops promote itself as a tourist destination for visitors to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, negotiations are underway for historic Chinese artifacts to be loaned to the Kamloops Art Gallery. Plans are also underway for a Kamloops/TRU business exchange and promotional day, led by the Mayor, at the B.C.-Canada Pavilion in the lead-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Venture Kamloops has invested in a special Kamloops-China Trade and Development service with a Chinese partner based in Beijing. The service's key purpose is to help Kamloops-based businesses obtain market intelligence, identify opportunities, and better understand key social and cultural practices. The service will also give firms access to affordable, on-the-ground assistance with translation, meeting space, scheduling, transportation, and immigrant investor programs.

Recently, Venture Kamloops offered a seminar for firms interested in doing business in China — eighty local companies attended. In the near future, Venture Kamloops will host a seminar in cooperation with the B.C. Ministry of Economic Development's 2010 Commerce Centre titled "Think Asia". Venture Kamloops has also invested heavily in its online materials. Its web site has an international component with a community profile available in 13 languages.

The relationship with Uji, is managed by a community committee chaired by the Mayor. Each year Council budgets $25,000 to cover the costs of the annual exchange program. These funds pay the Kamloops' delegation costs (bi-annual visits), and the hosting expenses for the Uji visits (which occur in alternating years).

➤ BENEFITS

Aside from the USA, Asia Pacific — in particular, China — is the most important market for Kamloops-based firms. Venture Kamloops recognizes the importance of China, and is focused on efforts to open doors for those businesses that are ready to pursue opportunities there. Local companies, such as Domtar, have forest products to sell. TRU-W, along with the local School District, has educational services to market.

Currently, TRU has 1,200 foreign students registered, including many of whom are from China. Venture Kamloops has estimated that TRU's foreign students directly inject close to $40 million each year into the local economy.[8] When parents of foreign students visit their children during the school year, they are also introduced to investment opportunities. Investments that result from such visits increase the positive economic impact.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

The Mayor of Kamloops, in cooperation with Venture Kamloops, will be leading a mission in October, 2007 to Japan and China. At least fifteen delegates will join the China portion of the mission. They will be seeking introductions and business opportunities in a number of fields including tourism and cultural promotion. Investor immigrant presentations and Olympic trade opportunities will also be featured. Venture Kamloops is investing $15,000 in the mission; the City of Kamloops is matching the funding.

8. This estimate is consistent with the figures compiled by the Ministry of Economic Development. The Ministry's figures estimate that each post-secondary student studying in Kamloops, specifically, spends close to $31,000 per year. Indirect benefits (generated by a multiplier effect) would be on top of this direct spending.

Venture Kamloops' twinning efforts are directed at identifying and capitalizing on the opportunities in China for local companies; the twinning with Changping is simply the first step. The twinning will, it is hoped, give companies an entry point into China. Once established, they can then expand their contacts, networks and business into other areas of China and, ultimately, other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

Kamloops is taking an aggressive approach to its Chinese twinning initiative. The City's decision to make Venture Kamloops responsible for this initiative (and the broader China strategy) indicates a determination to emphasize the economic nature of the effort, and to maximize the economic return to the community.

➤ CONTACTS

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Venture Kamloops
Chief Executive Officer
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Town of Lake Cowichan

Twinned with Ohtaki, Japan (1989)

The Town of Lake Cowichan (population 3,100) is situated on Vancouver Island, a one hour drive north of Victoria.

The principal industry in Lake Cowichan is forestry — all aspects of logging and silviculture are key to the local economy. The community serves as the western terminus of the Trans-Canada Trail. Its growing tourism sector has benefitted from the recent addition of adventure- and eco-tourism suppliers.

In 1989, Lake Cowichan entered into a twinning agreement with Ohtaki, Japan, a village of approximately 2,000 people on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. Ohtaki was merged into the larger city of Date, Japan in 2006.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

In 1988, the village of Ohtaki was formally looking for a Canadian sister city. Lake Cowichan's Mayor was approached through a personal contact and asked to consider a twinning relationship. After six months of negotiation, an official agreement was signed. At the time, Lake Cowichan and Ohtaki were the smallest communities in their respective countries to enter into a formal twinning arrangement.

The two communities were considered well-matched for a number of reasons, including:

- their comparable sizes
- their respective locations along rivers
- the presence of former railway lands
- the fact that both were participating in salmonid enhancement programs

From the outset, the main focus of the arrangement was education — the communities' school districts immediately signed their own partnership agreement, and annual student exchanges were initiated.

The school districts' partnership continued until the Lake Cowichan School District was amalgamated with the larger Duncan School District to form the Cowichan Valley School District. Today, student exchanges continue, but are less frequent.

➤ ORGANIZATION

Lake Cowichan's twinning with Ohtaki is managed by a group of community volunteers through an independent society.

➤ INVESTMENT

The Town of Lake Cowichan budgets approximately $10,000 annually to support the partnership with Ohtaki. Students must raise $2,500 each to participate in student exchanges. There are no grants or bursaries available; however, local businesses assist through fundraising efforts.

➤ BENEFITS

Student exchanges have helped Lake Cowichan students gain international experience and develop cultural awareness.

In past years, efforts were made to identify and develop commercial opportunities, including a jasper deposit near Lake Cowichan (which never came to fruition). This explicit search for commercial activities is not an experience common to other B.C.-Japan twinning arrangements.

The Cowichan Valley School District assumed responsibility for, and learned from, the Lake Cowichan-Ohtaki exchange program. Today the School District has international exchange agreements with counterparts in Mexico, Russia, Japan and China. Each year, upwards of 80 students from these other countries visit the region. The economic benefit of such visits is not insignificant.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

Sustaining the twinning with Ohtaki has its challenges for Lake Cowichan. For example, the ongoing reliance on home stay for Ohtaki students has resulted in some "volunteer fatigue" among host families.

As noted earlier, Ohtaki was recently incorporated into the City of Date. The Lake Cowichan-Ohtaki link does not appear to be a priority for Date officials. Prior to the merger, Ohtaki leaders set aside funds to guarantee future official delegations. With only one Ohtaki representative elected in the post-amalgamation elections, funding is no longer assured. An Ohtaki delegation is expected to visit Lake Cowichan in 2009. After that time, it is believed that delegations will visit only once every five years.

It is expected that student exchanges will continue; however, the frequency of exchanges is not certain.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

It can be difficult for small centres to sustain twinning relationships. The task is particularly difficult when political conditions change — for example, when sister cities are amalgamated with other municipalities.

➤ CONTACT

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Office of the Mayor
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www.town.lakecowichan.bc.ca

City of Merritt

Friendship agreement with Baishan, China (2005)

The City of Merritt (population 7,600) is located 285 kilometres northeast of Vancouver. It is the commercial centre for the Nicola Valley, and serves a trading area of approximately 15,000 people. Merritt's economy is based on forestry, agriculture, mining and tourism. Value-added manufacturing is becoming increasingly important, particularly in the forestry sector.

In 2005, the city entered into a friendship agreement with Baishan, a city located in China's Jilin province.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

Merritt's Mayor made two recent trips to China, the first in 2005 and the second in 2006. During these visits, he saw first-hand the economic opportunities available to communities involved in twinning relationships.

Chinese interest in Canadian education made opportunities in this sector one focus of the friendship agreement into which Merritt ultimately entered.

➤ ORGANIZATION

Following the Mayor's 2005 mission to China, Council created a China Opportunity Committee, and made it responsible for identifying and pursuing economic development opportunities involving Baishan.

➤ INVESTMENT

In 2006, several Chinese government representatives were invited to attend the famous Merritt Mountain Festival. This invitation resulted in a reciprocal invitation from the Northeast Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The invitation asked Merritt to send a delegation for a guided tour of major cities in Northeast China. A fourteen-person delegation was sent, including the Mayor, one Councillor, business representatives, an elected official from the Thompson-Nicola Regional District Board, and a Vancouver-based translator.

Also in 2006, Merritt's school district sent a delegation to Changchun, the capital city of Jilin Province. Delegates negotiated a bilateral agreement focused on teacher exchanges, which will ultimately expand to offer Dogwood certification (high school) to Chinese students who will live and study in Merritt.

Following the school district's mission, the City extended an invitation to a six-person delegation from Baishan. The Chinese delegation accepted but, travelled only as far as Vancouver.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

Local businesses in Merritt need to be sophisticated in order to capture the opportunities available through the growing inter-community relationship. At a minimum, owners must develop import-export knowledge — capitalizing on certain opportunities will only happen when owners acquire this knowledge. The city is hopeful that local economic development agencies (e.g., Community Futures) will support this need for training through the establishment of targeted programs.

There are local tourism sector opportunities that may result from Merritt's link to northern China. These opportunities will only materialize, however, once Canada obtains Approved Destination Status from the Chinese Government. In anticipation of Canada obtaining this status, local businesses are being encouraged to invest now in learning about the needs of the Chinese tourist market.

Opportunities for the sale of wood products are less certain. Building code changes to facilitate timber frame construction would need to be implemented in China before significant possibilities will emerge for lumber mills based in Merritt. At present, the Chinese are looking to buy only low-end wood products for furniture manufacturing.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

The visiting Chinese delegation's inability to reach Merritt from Vancouver points to a challenge faced by many smaller communities in the province: the dominance, in the minds of many from Asia Pacific, of the larger centres, particularly Metro Vancouver.

The desire to convince Chinese officials to amend their building code in favour of timber frame construction is one shared by many B.C. communities and the Province. Merritt, other affected cities and the Province may benefit from greater cooperation on this matter.

The city of Merritt is actively pursuing economic development opportunities, and views its friendship agreement as an important tool to that end. Mayor and Council understand that their involvement in, and support of, the twinning initiative is vital in the pursuit of international opportunities for the community. Ultimately, business owners and operators will need to play a key role in capturing the opportunities that emerge through the friendship agreement. Local businesses seem prepared to invest the resources that will be required.

➤ CONTACT

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City of Penticton

Twinned with Ikeda, Japan (1977)

Penticton is a city of 34,600 located at the south end of Okanagan Lake. The City's primary industries are tourism, wine production and fruit orchards. Penticton hosts several high profile sports (e.g., Ironman Canada) and cultural events annually, all of which contribute substantially to the local economy. Outdoor recreation is a key tourist attraction.

Penticton is the sister city of Ikeda (population 8,500), situated on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. Ikeda is known for its wine production and cattle industries.

Penticton and Ikeda became sister cities in 1977. Their relationship remains active today.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

The decision to establish a twinning arrangement came about as the result of a chance meeting. A group of Penticton business people travelling with an agriculture industry mission in Japan met the Mayor of Ikeda, who asked for advice about twinning opportunities in North America. From this casual meeting, the relationship developed.

Cultural exchanges (including those between students) have been the focus of the arrangement since its inception. The most recent exchange occurred in August, 2007, when a 20-person delegation from Ikeda visited to celebrate the relationship's 30th anniversary.

The city of Penticton's neighbouring municipality, the District of Summerland, has a twinning arrangement with Ikeda's neighbouring city, Toyokoro. For some time, Penticton and Summerland have worked closely together to foster their respective relationships. In 2002 a joint Penticton/Summerland delegation traveled to Japan to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Summerland and Toyokoro, and the 25th anniversary of Penticton and Ikeda twinnings.

➤ ORGANIZATION

In the early days of the twinning relationship, an informal committee of community volunteers organized the many exchanges that occurred. The committee was eventually formalized and registered, becoming the Penticton-Ikeda Sister City Society. Today, the organization has more than two hundred members, is independent of Council, and is run entirely by volunteers. Its principal role, like that of its predecessor, is to organize the community exchange program. Costs for the organization and the exchange program are funded by participants and through occasional fundraising events. City Council remains supportive of the effort and hosts a biannual civic dinner to welcome delegates from Ikeda.

➤ INVESTMENT

The first delegation to Ikeda, led by Penticton's Mayor of the day, consisted of 51 community representatives. The delegation members paid their own expenses — an expectation that remains in place today for non-City officials.

Various types of exchanges have occurred (and continue to occur) under the relationship:

- official, annual (alternating) city delegation visits to the sister community
- Penticton Pipe Band visit to, and performance in, Ikeda and other parts of Japan
- joint Ikeda and Hokkaido Chambers of Commerce delegation to Penticton
- regular youth exchanges initiated by the Ikeda Jaycees
- Penticton Chamber of Commerce delegation to Ikeda

- Ikeda dairy farmers visit to Penticton
- visit and performance of traditional Japanese entertainment and sport by Kobe's Ikuta Shinto Shrine
- Penticton delegation visit to the 100th anniversary of Ikeda
- Ikeda delegation and planting of a rose bush in the Ikeda Japanese Garden in Penticton
- regular high-school student exchanges involving home stays
- participation by Penticton representatives in the Ikeda winter festival, and in the Canadian Embassy's Sister City Symposium held in Ikeda
- two-way exchanges from each city's school principals to study education systems
- an Assistant English Teacher program that places Penticton-based teachers in Ikeda for two-year terms
- large visiting delegations and joint performances by the communities' high school bands in celebration of the 20th anniversary in 1997

➤ BENEFITS

The impetus behind the Penticton-Ikeda twinning arrangement was cultural more than economic. To date, cultural exchanges (including those centred around students) have remained the focus of the relationship. The exchanges have helped to build a high level of cultural awareness in the community, and have given many citizens the experience and confidence needed to operate internationally. In helping to establish and foster close relations with the people of Ikeda (and Japan), the exchanges have also generated some economic benefits for the community.

The range of cultural, educational and economic benefits realized by Penticton over the years is considerable:

- A number of community organizations in Penticton have established links with their counterparts in Ikeda. Groups include Soroptomist, Lions, and Rotary Clubs, as well as the Chamber of Commerce. Some of these organizations have made substantial contributions to community projects, such as the Japanese garden in Penticton.
- Students from the communities' high schools have spent a year abroad in a sister school. Several Ikeda students have graduated from Penticton high schools, and have gone on to attend Canadian universities.
- Hockey programs in Hokkaido have received assistance from the Okanagan Hockey School, which is based in Penticton. The School also receives and trains young Japanese hockey players.
- The most recent delegation from Ikeda (sent to celebrate the relationship's 30th anniversary) included professional wine makers who came to confer with their Penticton-based counterparts.

The Penticton-Ikeda Sister City Society characterizes the twinning arrangement and its benefits in the following way:

"The various programs and projects provide a 'once in a lifetime' experience for those that participate. The contrasting cultures and demonstrations of friendship leave a lasting impression. Dramatic differences in lifestyle as well as some surprising similarities become apparent. A better understanding of another country and its people is gained. The sister city relationship between Ikeda and Penticton has provided cultural, educational and economic stimuli to both cities and their citizens."

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

The value of Penticton's arrangement with Ikeda is well recognized in Penticton, particularly among those who have participated in one of the many exchanges. The Sister City Society has an ongoing need to bring new people and new ideas into the fold. This need for constant renewal is essential to the continuation of many exchange-based twinning relationships, including Penticton's.

There has been recent discussion of a possible twinning in China, but nothing has developed as yet. The city understands that finding the right match will require considerable time and effort.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

In the introduction to this *Tool Kit*, it was noted that twinning arrangements which emphasize non-commercial activities should not be discounted. It was suggested that non-commercial activities have their own intrinsic value, but also often do generate significant economic return to communities. It was noted, as well, that non-commercial linkages can be exceedingly important in building mutual trust and a sense of comfort between communities. These qualities are critical to successful business relationships, and are often necessary to have in place in order for business relationships to develop.

Penticton's relationship with Ikeda is a strong example of the intrinsic value — cultural, economic — of arrangements that focus on non-commercial activities.

CONTACTS

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City of Port Moody

Friendship agreements with Tanggu District of Tianjin, China (2005) and Pinggu District of Beijing, China (2007)

Port Moody (population 30,100), known as the "City of the Arts", is located at the head of Burrard Inlet, 40 minutes from both downtown Vancouver and the US border. It is adjacent to the cities of Coquitlam and Burnaby, and is just steps from seaside parks, mountain trails and lakes.

Port Moody is a growing city, with strong industrial, commercial and residential bases. Community leaders are committed to harmonizing the natural environment with the economy to sustain a high quality of life.

Port Moody has established friendship agreements with two districts in China: Tanggu District of Tianjin (2005), and Pinggu District of Beijing (2007). Tianjin is home to the second largest port in China.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS

Port Moody's friendship agreements were initiated by its Mayor, who, from regular trips to China, had gained a first-hand appreciation of the immense growth and activity in the region. During one visit, the Mayor was introduced to a municipal official from Tianjin who shared an interest in international partnerships. The Canadian Embassy in China recommended that a friendship agreement would be a good starting point for Port Moody. Port Moody accepted this advice, viewing friendship agreements as an effective way to introduce local businesses and industries to China.

➤ ORGANIZATION

The Mayor, Council and City staff manage Port Moody's friendship agreements at this time. Because the relationships are relatively new, there is no plan at present to delegate their management to an independent society, or to an existing City body that operates at arm's-length to City Hall.

By maintaining direct involvement in, and control over, the relationships, Port Moody Council hopes to develop strong ties to its counterparts in the Chinese cities. Port Moody recognizes that the success of the relationships will depend, to a large degree, on the trust that is established at the most senior city level. Port Moody's Mayor and Council understand that their direct participation and leadership constitute a show of respect for their Chinese partners, and a demonstration of commitment to the relationships.

➤ INVESTMENT

Port Moody does not have a separate, specific budget for international exchanges — at present, costs are covered under general operations. In the past, the Mayor has personally covered his own travel costs. Council did pass a resolution to allocate $1,300 per person from Council's travel budget to cover flight and hotel accommodations for the Mayor and one Councillor for a recent visit to Beijing. The purpose of the trip was to meet with officials of the Chinese Hockey Association and other organizations to investigate the possibility of Port Moody hosting Chinese Olympic winter sports teams prior to, and during, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

➤ BENEFITS

Port Moody's friendship agreements have presented opportunities for exchange at many different levels, and on many topics of mutual interest. One such topic concerns local environmental sustainability. Recent discussions between Port Moody and Tanggu resulted in the Chinese District amending its practice of burning debris in public parks — a practice that negatively impacted local air quality. Other sustainable approaches adopted by Tanggu include using ocean water for cooling and geo-thermal power for heating. The local government is also studying Port Moody's bylaw that bans the use of pesticides, and is following Port Moody's approach in planting thousands of trees.

Mayors from around the world have joined forces, under the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, to promote good environmental practices and local sustainability. Port Moody is involved with a number of initiatives (the City's Mayor is Metro Vancouver's representative in discussions at the International Council), and is working to involve its Chinese friendship cities in sustainability efforts. Indications are that representatives from the Chinese cities will attend the 2008 meeting of the World Mayors Council for Climate Change.

In the near future, Port Moody expects to receive delegations of municipal staff from China, sent to study aspects of municipal management and administration. Efforts are also being made, to organize exchanges for community arts and culture groups, and local sports teams.

Mayor and Council view the friendship agreements — and, on a broader scale, the twinning concept — as instruments to promote local economic development. It is expected that the non-commercial benefits realized to date will help to set the stage for more economic exchange in future years.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

Efforts are underway to promote environmental building standards for timber frame construction to the Chinese friendship cities. Such efforts, it is hoped, will result in opportunities (for firms in Port Moody and B.C. as a whole) related to the sale of wood construction materials to China.

Port Moody understands the importance of building support for the friendship initiatives among members of the business community. The City-to-City bilateral agreements are simply the frameworks for separate efforts to be pursued. It will largely be up to business and industry to make the most of the opportunities available through the agreements. The president of the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce was a member of the August, 2007 delegation to China. An invitation has been extended to the Tanggu District Chamber of Commerce to visit Port Moody. A B.C. delegation, including representatives from Port Moody, will visit China later in the year.

Port Moody has indicated an interest in creating a partnership with at least one other city in Asia Pacific.

➤ OBSERVATION

Port Moody is moving quickly to identify areas of common interest with the leaders of its friendship cities. Port Moody is also intent on identifying opportunities for groups in the community, including local businesses. All links that are created will have direct benefits for Port Moody, but will also benefit the broader Metro Vancouver region.

➤ CONTACT

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City of Quesnel

Twinned with Shiraoi, Japan (1981)

Quesnel (population 10,500) is located in B.C.'s Cariboo region, at the confluence of the Fraser and Quesnel Rivers.

Quesnel's economy revolves around forestry — the community is one of North America's major centres for wood products manufacturing. Approximately 100 firms in Quesnel are directly active in the industry, involved in pursuits such as pulp and paper, high volume wood commodity processing, and high quality furniture production.

Quesnel's goals are to become the most diversified wood products manufacturing centre in Canada, the most interesting gateway for travelers en route to Yukon and Alaska, and B.C.'s finest rural community in which to live.

The City of Quesnel twinned with Shiraoi, Japan in 1981. Shiraoi's economy has several similarities to that of Quesnel. The Nippon Paper mill is the city's major employer.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

In 1980, Japan's Daishawa Paper built two mills in Quesnel following a visit to the City by the company's President. In support of his belief that *"children are the future and we have to know each other"*, the President urged the two communities to establish a sister city relationship.

In the early years, the two City Councils were the driving forces in the development of the relationship; they have remained actively involved in, and supportive of, the relationship ever since. Over time, however, community-based volunteers took over direct responsibility for much of the twinning activity.

The twinning agreement was signed in 1981 in Shiraoi. The signing was witnessed by the first Quesnel delegation to the City. It was led by the Mayor, and included representatives of the Rotary Club and one of the elementary schools.

In 1987, 19 Quesnel students, two teachers and the School Board Chair visited Shiraoi to establish subsidiary twinning arrangements with two local schools. Today, each of Quesnel's two high schools and six elementary schools is twinned with a Shiraoi school.

Regular civic and student exchanges have occurred since the 1980's, and remain a key part of the twinning relationship.

➤ ORGANIZATION

The independent, non-profit Quesnel-Shiraoi Society has a 25-person board of directors. Together, the directors represent a range of community organizations, all of which actively support the twinning, including the City of Quesnel, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce and School District.

➤ INVESTMENT

At the inception of the twinning relationship, West Fraser Mills, Daishawa Paper, Daishawa/Marubini Paper and Weldwood each made contributions of $12,500 to an endowment for student exchanges. Over the years, individual citizens have made bequests to allow the endowment to grow.

The agreement between the cities limits the size of visiting delegations to 50 people. Delegations are responsible for their own airfare, hotel and transportation to the sister city. Once there, all delegates, including the Mayor and Council members, are billeted with local families. The host family provides breakfast each day, the host sister city society provides lunch, and dinner is a joint society/community responsibility. Side trips are at the expense of the visitors.

Mayor Nate Bello, City of Quesnel

"I would be very interested in broadening our twinning relationships to China and India. A sister city in either country would not be out of the question."

In 2007, 15 students and their chaperones each received $900 bursaries from the endowment towards their travel expenses. To qualify, each student had to succeed in interviews and staged social events, assume community obligations before leaving, and demonstrate an ability to contribute to the community upon their return.

Every year that Quesnel sends a delegation to Shiraoi, the City of Quesnel contributes $3,500 from its annual operating budget. When Quesnel hosts a Shiraoi delegation, the amount budgeted is $7,000. City Hall also budgets for the costs for officials traveling to Shiraoi on City business.

➤ BENEFITS

The Quesnel-Shiraoi twinning arrangement came about as a result of the major economic investment in Quesnel by a large Japanese company, Daishawa. The relationship that has developed under the arrangement, however, is very much focused on culture and education. The primary benefits to Quesnel (and Shiraoi), accordingly, have been cultural and educational. Some economic benefits have been realized. Examples include: the establishment of a Victoria-based, Japanese tour company by a former Quesnel student; a Quesnel resident exporting specialty wood to Japan; and, spending in the local Quesnel economy by visiting students and delegates. Economic development and commercial exchange, however, have never been the motivating factors for either community. Friendship, cultural awareness and education for youth are at the core of the Quesnel-Shiraoi relationship.

In 2001, Quesnel House, a nature centre, was built in Shiraoi as a nature centre. There also exists a Quesnel Cultural Centre in downtown Shiraoi with permanent staff to coordinate exchanges. In Quesnel, $200,000 was raised to build Shiraoi House in a local park.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

Quesnel's arrangement with Shiraoi is strong and active, and is expected to remain so in the years ahead.

Quesnel's Mayor has indicated an interest in expanding the City's twinning efforts to target communities in China and/or India. Quesnel has some shared history with Guangdong Province, which was home to many of the Chinese settlers who came to the Cariboo in the late 1800's. Quesnel's current, sizeable Indo-Canadian community has strong connections to parts of India.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

The strength of Quesnel's twinning relationship with Shiraoi is rooted in the commitment, involvement and support of the citizens of both communities. The local governments were early drivers, and remain champions; they have been able, however, to step back and allow community members to take the lead.

The Quesnel-Shiraoi twinning exists primarily to promote cultural and educational exchange. However, Quesnel's future efforts to twin in China and/or India would likely assume a stronger commercial focus.

➤ CONTACT

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City of Richmond

Twinned with Wakayama Japan (1973)

The City of Richmond (population 176,600) is located in Metro Vancouver between the north and south arms of the Fraser River. It is home to two international seaports, and the Vancouver International Airport.

Richmond's well-diversified economy includes services, retail, tourism, high technology, light manufacturing, airport support and aviation, agriculture, fishing, and government. In recent years, Richmond has emerged as a leading centre for high tech industries.

More than half of the population of Richmond is of Asian descent. Many came to Richmond in the early 1990's from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. Others arrived from India and The Philippines. For many years, Richmond was a destination for immigrants from Japan.

Richmond is twinned with Wakayama, Japan, a city of 370,000 on the Pacific Ocean.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENT

The Richmond-Wakayama twinning was originally the idea of a local Richmond entrepreneur. He believed that an international linkage would create significant economic and other benefits for Richmond, and was able to convince the Council of the day to pursue a partnership. He made the introduction to Wakayama officials after determining that the two cities were well matched. One factor in the cities' favour was a shared history: Wakayama (City and Province) was the family home of many of the early Japanese fishermen who immigrated to Canada from Japan.

Within five years, a number of Japanese companies, including a major Japanese automobile firm, had established a presence in Richmond. Over the years, despite these economic roots and ongoing economic benefits, the nature of the relationship evolved to the point where, today, twinning activities are focused primarily on culture, education and athletics. Secondary school exchanges are an important component of the relationship.

2008 marks the 35th anniversary of the Richmond-Wakayama twinning.

➤ ORGANIZATION

The City of Richmond has a 15-person Sister City Committee (of Council) that is responsible for the management of all sister city activities.[9]
The Committee's membership is composed of 12 citizens appointed by Council, one member of Council, one elected School Board official and one School District staff member. The Committee Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by, and from among, Committee members.

Committee appointments are for one, two or three year terms. Originally, individuals could not sit for more than nine years. This restriction was eventually lifted, to reflect the reality that, in international relations, continuity and tenure can be important. The Committee may invite representatives from other community organizations to sit as *ex-officio* (non-voting) members.

In its terms of reference, the Sister City Committee is directed to foster:

- friendship and mutual understanding
- cultural exchanges
- student and athletic exchanges
- trade and other economic linkages

9 Richmond also has a sister city relationship with Pierrefond, PQ.

In 2001 the Committee's mandate was expanded to include responsibility for identifying new, potential sister cities. To prepare for this task, the Committee held a special, facilitated planning session. At that session, Committee members identified specific criteria for assessing candidates:

- benefits to Richmond (economic, cultural, social, education)
- community profile (similar population and geography, complementary industries, strong education sector)
- historical connection (people, work)
- common values (safety, stability in government, fair treatment of people, security)
- common interests (sports, music, arts)

The Committee also proposed that Richmond recognize two categories of association: a full sister city relationship; and a less formal, friendship relationship. Richmond today is willing to enter into several friendship relationships, but only two-to-three formal sister city arrangements. In addition, friendship relationships are to be assessed on an ongoing basis, with the intent being that they either evolve to sister city status within five years, or be cancelled.

➤ INVESTMENT

The Sister City Committee receives funding each year from the City. In 2007, the Committee was granted $8,500; a separate $10,000 was approved for a member of Council and a City staff member to travel to China. Committee funds may not be used to defray costs incurred by School Board representatives participating in official visits, the cost of gifts and hospitality related to student exchanges, or the expenses of spouses or other persons invited to participate in sister city delegations. The Committee may, however, raise monies (e.g., corporate sponsorships) to fund expenses not covered by the City. Delegations to Richmond are responsible for all of their travel, hotel and transportation expenses.

The agreement with Wakayama calls for official, alternating exchanges to occur every three years. Efforts are made to tie visits to major events, such as the Wakayama Transportation Expo, or the Aichi Expo held in 2005. Wakayama representatives will be guests in Richmond in 2008 for the 35th anniversary of the twinning.

In 2007, Richmond began a formal search for a Chinese sister city. As part of this search, the Sister City Committee requested, and was granted permission, to send a fact-finding delegation to each of the four, short-listed Chinese candidates. The mission was paid for out of Committee funds.

➤ BENEFITS

The twinning arrangement with Wakayama has generated substantial and wide-ranging benefits for Richmond. Significantly, Richmond's benefits have included strong and direct economic benefits — a point that sets Richmond apart from many other communities involved in twinnings with Japanese cities. Richmond's ability to provide Japanese firms with industrial land and access to Canadian markets has been key in making the twinning an economic development success.

The ongoing cultural and educational exchanges honour Richmond's early Japanese roots and serve to keep the relationship strong.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

The relationship with Wakayama remains robust, and is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. However, China is expected to be the primary focus of Richmond's future twinning efforts. As noted earlier, Richmond's Sister City Committee began the formal search for a Chinese sister city in 2007. The Committee surveyed the community for names of suitable twinning candidates. The resulting list of 14 cities was reviewed and reduced to a short-list of four, all of which were located in regions that were home to many of the recent Chinese immigrants to Richmond. The Committee chose quite consciously

to focus on regions other than Guangdong Province, despite Guangdong's established relationship with British Columbia, and the existing sister city relationship between Guangzhou (Guangdong's principal city) and the City of Vancouver.

The Sister City Committee was granted permission to send a four-person fact-finding delegation to each of the four, short-listed candidates. The delegation spent two days in each place, gathering information on the local government and the community. Meetings were held in each city with local officials.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

Richmond has adopted a systematic and structured approach in its search for a new, Chinese sister city. In certain key respects, Richmond's approach is similar to the suggested process outlined in this *Tool Kit*. Richmond's efforts reflect the City's understanding that twinning arrangements represent long-term, significant investments that should not be entered into quickly. Finding the best match is critical to the ability of both communities to maximize the potential value of the relationship.

➤ CONTACT

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City of Victoria

Twinned with Suzhou, China (1980) and Morioka, Japan (1985)

The city of Victoria (population 78,600) is British Columbia's capital city, located at the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Victoria forms part of the Capital Regional District, or Greater Victoria (population 345,000).

Victoria is a government city and retirement centre. The local and regional economies benefit from a strong tourism sector, the presence of Canada's western naval base, shipbuilding and ship-repair industries, high-tech industries, forest products and machine manufacturing. The region is developing as a marine, forestry and agricultural research centre and is noted for its educational institutions, including the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, Camosun College, and Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific.

Victoria twinned with Suzhou, China in 1980, and Morioka, Japan in 1985.

➤ TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS

Victoria City Council signed a twinning agreement with Suzhou, China in July 1980. Suzhou's world-famous classical Chinese gardens, and its status as a centre for education and culture, made it a good match for Victoria.

The agreement with Morioka, Japan was signed in May 1985. The impetus for this twinning was the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Inazo Nitobe, a widely respected Japanese diplomat who served as a Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations. Dr. Nitobe was a pacifist and educator who was born in Morioka and died in Victoria. The signing of the sister city agreement with Morioka marked the beginning of an intensive series of visits and exchanges, including numerous cultural, educational and sporting exchanges, both official and private.

➤ ORGANIZATION

Originally, the twinning arrangements were managed by a Sister City Advisory Committee of Council, whose members were appointed by the City. Some time ago, however, the City encouraged the creation of independent, community-based, not-for-profit societies to take responsibility for the relationships. One society per twinning arrangement was established.

➤ INVESTMENT

Four years ago, the societies were each provided with a one-time City grant of $1,000. Since that time, the societies have been responsible for meeting their own funding needs. Fundraising, gifting and membership fees are the three primary sources of income.

For a number of years, one of the founding members of the Victoria-Suzhou Sister City Association personally has paid the tuition for students from Suzhou studying at Pearson College.

The City pays for official delegations from its sister cities. Costs that are covered include accommodation, meals and local transportation for a maximum of seven persons.

➤ BENEFITS

There are monuments to the twinnings distributed throughout Victoria's public areas, including stone lions from Suzhou in Chinatown, a Nitobe Garden at the Royal Jubilee Hospital, and a Marioka monument in Beacon Hill Park.

The twinning with Morioka has helped to build Victoria's profile in Japan, which in turn has helped to make Victoria a regular tourist destination for Japanese tour groups. Subsidiary twinning agreements between educational institutions bring Japanese students to study in Victoria, at public schools (Victoria School District), in some of the

area's independent schools, and in post-secondary institutions. Victoria's Camosun College has an official partnership with its counterpart in Morioka.

➤ LOOKING FORWARD

When Canada obtains Approved Destination Status from the Government of China (as is expected), the opportunity to capitalize on tourism opportunities through the City's ties in Suzhou will be considerable.

The well-developed tourism programs from Japan are expected to flourish and grow. It is also hoped that new exchange and business opportunities involving Morioka will develop. The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce has a twinning agreement with the Morioka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Together, the two groups are encouraging trade missions and business exchanges. Recently, the Morioka Soccer Association and the Lower Island Soccer Association signed a twinning agreement to encourage sports and cultural exchanges.

➤ OBSERVATIONS

Given Victoria's location at the centre of the Capital Region the City's existing twinning arrangements generate benefits for the broader region. Indeed, many of the tourism and educational opportunities that are highlighted through the City's twinning efforts are actually based in adjacent municipalities. Other industries (e.g., agriculture, viniculture) that stand to benefit as the twinning relationships continue to evolve are also situated throughout the Capital Region.

The existing involvement of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce suggests that the business sector understands the value of twinning to the broader region. A true regional approach involving other local governments may allow the region as a whole to maximize the full potential of the twinning efforts.

➤ CONTACTS

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